

Syria urges Clinton to keep 'promises'

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria on Sunday called on U.S. President Bill Clinton to keep promises it says he made at his summit last month with the Syrian leader, Hafez Al Assad. The government newspaper Al Thawra said the United States must "commit itself to the promises Clinton made following the Geneva summit" on Jan. 16. In his comments to reporters after that meeting, Mr. Clinton said he had Mr. Assad had "laid the foundation for real negotiations" between the two foes. But he added that it was up to Syria and Israel to negotiate the specifics. "The newspaper asserted that Mr. Clinton also made a commitment to 'push the peace process forward' and 'break the stalemate' in Syrian-Israeli talks. Despite its appeal to Mr. Clinton, the newspaper said Israel is ultimately to blame for the stalemate. The newspaper called the talks in Washington between Syrian and Israeli negotiators "the dialogue of the deaf." It charged that Israel is stalling for time to "diminish the momentum which the Geneva summit has generated due to Assad and Clinton's convergence of views."

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Yemeni leaders sign accord, pledge commitment

King Hussein, hosting signing ceremony, says agreement will consolidate Yemeni unity

His Majesty calls for end to Arab differences

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Yemeni leaders Sunday signed a reconciliation and reform agreement designed to end a six-month political crisis and bring about reforms to steer the course of 44-month-old united Yemen.

His Majesty King Hussein, who played a key role in mediating the crisis, hosted the signing of the 32-page document by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh and 35 other Yemeni political leaders at the Ragbadan Palace.

The agreement seeks to end bitter differences that emerged between the leaders of former North and South Yemen which merged and produced today's united Yemen in May 1990.

The differences stemmed from southern complaints that the northern leaders were seeking to turn the merger into domination and that they were not giving enough attention to developing the southern areas of Yemen which were part of Marxist South Yemen.

A state of violence, which Yemeni leaders blamed of "extremist elements," exacerbated the differences between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh, who ruled North and South Yemen respectively prior to the merger.

The King, in a brief speech at the signing ceremony, expressed optimism that the reconciliation and reform agreement would lead to healing all Yemeni differences.

"We see this agreement as a resumption of the Yemeni march towards unity and a means to enhance the democratic process in Yemen," the King said in his speech at the ceremony, broadcast live on radio and television.

The King, who sat between President Saleh and Vice-President Beidh during the ceremony, urged the Yemeni leaders to put aside their differences for sake of national unity and the Yemeni people.

"The document represents a genuine orientation towards fulfilling the goals of Yemen's unity, which we hope will serve as an advance model of the state of law where sound relations among the various authorities should prevail," said the King.

"Let us hope that the accord will contribute towards a comprehensive Arab awakening that will confront and deal with inter-Arab divisions and overcome the sense of regionalism and help build an Arab Nation whose principles are based on democracy, justice and brotherly relations," the King said.

"We dream of a national awakening that will light the way for the nation's liberation from oppression, slavery and fear as well as foreign ambitions and will eliminate despotism, famine and strife from the Arab World," the King said.

Addressing the Yemeni leaders, the King said: "You are now embarking on a difficult road towards comprehensive reform that requires every effort on the part of all Yemenis towards ending the darkness in the Arab region and fratricidal strife."

See page 10 for highlights of the Yemeni reconciliation accord

and other Yemeni leaders also made short speeches reaffirming their commitment to the document and paying tribute to King Hussein and others who contributed to mediating the crisis in their country.

Mr. Saleh voiced hope that the Yemeni leadership, government and people would translate the agreement to reality on the ground.

He called on the three main political parties, his own the General People's Congress (GPC), the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) and the Al Islah Islamic Party, to contribute to the success of the agreement.

The president thanked King Hussein for his efforts to preserve the unity of Yemen and pledged: "We will turn over the pages of the past, with all the tragedies that they brought, and intricacies and ambiguities surrounding them, and we will sincerely translate this document into reality, God willing."

Mr. Saleh also thanked Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who was present during the signing, and all countries and parties, including the United States and the European Union, which were involved in the mediation efforts that led to the agreement, drafted by a national dialogue committee representing Yemeni political groups and independents.

In a 10-minute speech, Mr. Beidh expressed optimism that the signing of the document would pave the way for improved relations among politicians in united Yemen "despite the wounds and sufferings."

"Despite our reservations, pain and feelings that difficulties still persist... we will work on the implementation of the accord because Yemen is precious to all of us," he said, adding that Yemen was witnessing the birth of a new era.

Also attending the ceremony were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Mohammad and Crown Prince Hassan, Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid and Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ben Alawi.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the speaker of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament.

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Rights group questions Egypt deaths

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian Human Rights Organisation Sunday published witnesses' statements indicating that Cairo police may have killed 10 militants in cold blood, contradicting the official version that they died in clashes. The organisation said it had submitted the information to the authorities, demanding an explanation to "dispel doubts" about two police raids in Cairo in February. However, it had not yet received a response. The witnesses gave accounts of the police killing of seven militants in the Zawya Al Hamra district on Feb. 1 and three in the Sayyeda Zeinab district on Feb. 14. Witnesses said police arrived in the Zawya Al Hamra district accompanied by a bearded man "who bore visible marks of blows and torture and was leading the police to the apartment where the seven suspected Islamic militants were hiding." The said they later heard shots lasting 12 seconds.



His Majesty listens to Yemeni Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh as Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh looks on during Sunday's signing ceremony of a national reconciliation agreement (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

More than 300 Yemeni politicians and tribal leaders as well as government officials witnessed the signing ceremony, during which President Saleh, Vice-President Beidh

who contributed to mediating the crisis in their country.

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Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the speaker of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament.

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Rabin to visit Spain, Portugal

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin begins a four-day official trip to Spain and Portugal on Monday hoping to get them to influence more Arab states to make peace with Israel, his spokesman said on Sunday. Oded Ben-ami said Mr. Rabin also hoped to garner support for a new Israeli-European accord to strengthen economic ties. Negotiations on the accord, the first in 19 years, are due to begin in Brussels on Monday.

Mr. Rabin will visit Spain on Monday and Tuesday and Portugal on Wednesday and Thursday.

Gamsakhurdia funeral rescheduled

MOSCOW (AP) — Plans for a funeral Sunday for ousted Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia have fallen through, said ITAR-TASS news agency on Sunday.

It said Gamsakhurdia would be buried Thursday in the courtyard of his family's home-in-exile in Grozny, the capital of Russia's breakaway Chechnya region.

The dispatch quoted Leda Arshvadze, the sister of Gamsakhurdia's widow, ITAR-TASS had earlier reported that Gamsakhurdia would be buried on Sunday in Grozny.

Gamsakhurdia, who led an unsuccessful rebellion against Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze last fall, died about six weeks ago under still-mysterious circumstances.

Swiss to ban foreign freight across Alps

BERN (AFP) — Switzerland voted in a referendum Sunday to ban foreign road freight from crossing the Swiss Alps. Fifty-two per cent of voters agreed that foreign trucks should be transported by train through the mountains, according to the results of a referendum released Sunday.

The move is likely to upset talks on Switzerland's candidature for European Union (EU) membership. The referendum initiative, backed by left-wing and ecological groups, called for a halt to increases in the capacity of road transport through the mountains and for all foreign freight to be transported by rail, within 10 years.

In particular, the move will hit freight from Germany, the Benelux countries and Italy.

Debate on draft tenancy law put off after heated exchanges

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday cut short a debate on a draft temporary law on tenancy so that deputies and the government could have more time to reexamine a clause that denies landlords the right to evict tenants even if the lease ends.

The Judiciary Committee recommended that the House endorse article five of the draft law which says "the tenant can continue to occupy the rented property after the lease ends even if he and the landlord have agreed that the property should be evacuated."

But Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies Hamam Said, Ahmad Kofahi and Abdul Munem Abu Zant argued that the relationship between the landlord and the tenant be conducted on the basis of contracts they sign.

Sheikh Abo Zant argued that tenants should evacuate the rented property after the lease expires so that landlords can rent their properties out at rates that correspond with economic changes or use it to house members of their families.

Leftist Deputy Bassam Haddadin appealed to the IAF deputies to consider the social implications such a law would have, claiming that a powerful lobby of landlords is exercising pressure to have the law amended in this direction.

An uproar erupted in the House when Deputy Samer Habashneh criticised the IAF deputies for their stand and Sheikh Abu Zant said he "rejected this cheap attempt to outbid us."

"He is an undemocratic person," Mr. Habashneh said of Sheikh Abu Zant when he responded angrily to his criticism of the IAF stand.

But Mr. Habashneh said he was withdrawing his criticism if the IAF deputies felt it amounted to "aggression against them." He insisted, however, that the issue was a very sensitive one that should not be dealt with through slogans.

"I find fault with the IAF stand because it includes an unnecessary bias against the great majority of the people. This stand conflicts with the IAF slogans," Mr. Habashneh said, claiming that landlords' inability to evict tenants is the "one (legal point) that enabled people to maintain the stability of the country" despite the difficult economic challenges.

Eighteen people died when Israeli troops opened up needlessly on vehicles, Betsalem said.

However, two soldiers were gunned down by Palestinians at roadblocks and 13 Palestinians died when the soldiers manning checkpoints were in mortal danger.

Twenty-two Palestinians and an Israeli policeman were shot

(Continued on page 5)

PLO work towards civilian hand-over deal this week

Combined agency dispatches

THE Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) hopes to strike a deal with Israel this week on the hand-over of civilian powers in Gaza and Jericho, one of the last few hurdles to Palestinian self-rule.

Chief PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said last week's talks in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba had been successful and that "we hope to clinch the civilian track" at a new round to start in Cairo on Monday.

A committee on the transfer of civilian powers has been working to hammer out deals on electricity, archaeology and communications, including the launch of Palestinian television and radio stations.

But negotiators must also clear remaining hurdles on a Palestinian police force and the question of how many Palestinian prisoners are to be released from Israeli jails.

In Amman, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat once again Sunday accused Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of prevaricating on Palestinian autonomy.

"I am completely astonished that (Rabin) is insisting (on) not following up and implementing accurately and honestly what has been agreed upon," Mr. Arafat told reporters.

"According to what he's saying, he's going to bypass what has been agreed upon," Mr. Arafat added.

The PLO leader arrived in Amman Sunday to attend the signing of a reconciliation agreement between Yemeni leaders. (See separate story)

His statement was a response to Mr. Rabin's remarks published Saturday in Egypt's Al Ahram newspaper that a further delay in the implementation of the autonomy agreement was preferable to leaving thorny issues unresolved.

"It is better to have a month's delay in implementing (the accord) so that matters that could ignite the situation will be clear and agreed upon for us and the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin was quoted as saying.

According to the Sept. 13 agreement, Israeli troops should have begun a pullout from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in December.

But differing interpretations and conflicting demands have held up the withdrawal and also threaten the April 13 date envisaged as the start of Palestinian self-rule.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made considerable headway with a Feb. 9 agreement on security arrangements.

Asked when he thought a final agreement could be signed, Mr. Arafat said, "Who knows?"

But he added that he still expects Israel to abide by the April 13 deadline.

Dr. Shaath said in Cairo negotiations made progress last week on drawing up a timetable for the release of prisoners and that the issue would be on the agenda this week.

The Palestinians want Israel to release all prisoners in time for elections, which are to take place in July under the Sept. 13 accord.

(Continued on page 5)

Betsalem assails roadblock killings

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The majority of the 30 Palestinians shot dead at army roadblocks in the last six years did not pose any threat to the soldiers who opened fire, according to Israeli's leading human rights group.

In a report published Sunday, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (Betsalem) called for clear rules of engagement which would allow the security forces to open fire only when they face immediate danger.

Eighteen people died when Israeli troops opened up needlessly on vehicles, Betsalem said.

However, two soldiers were gunned down by Palestinians at roadblocks and 13 Palestinians died when the soldiers manning checkpoints were in mortal danger.

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(Continued on page 5)

NATO hopes Bosnia strikes will not become necessary

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The U.N.'s envoy said on Sunday snow would prevent Serbs from meeting the West's deadline for removal of heavy weapons around Sarajevo, but the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) hoped air strikes would not be necessary to enforce its ultimatum.

Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said he had received a telephone call from his U.S. counterpart William Perry pledging no immediate air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces around Sarajevo.

Mr. Perry said there would be no air strikes either Sunday night, or Monday, Mr. Grachev said on Russian Television.

Shortly beforehand, Interfax news agency, which had a correspondent close by during the telephone conversation, reported that Mr. Perry had promised no strikes during the next two days.

NATO had given Bosnian Serbs until Sunday 2400 GMT to withdraw all heavy weapons from around Sarajevo or hand them over to U.N. control, warning that they would otherwise face air strikes.

Eleven U.N. member nations involved in operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina were to meet Sunday just half an hour before the weapons-withdrawal deadline in Sarajevo, a U.N. spokeswoman said.

The countries' ambassadors were to be given an update on the situation in Sarajevo by U.N. peacekeeping chief Kofi Annan in the final minutes before the midnight GMT deadline expires," said spokeswoman Kathryn Gordon.

U.N. ambassadors of Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, Jordan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia, Spain and the United States will attend the briefing, she said.

All the countries either have peacekeeping troops in Bosnia or, like the United States, are directly involved in the U.N.-NATO ultimatum.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic said the U.N. must not tolerate Serb failure to pull back their guns from around Sarajevo by the midnight deadline.

Mr. Izetbegovic told reporters that bad weather was no justification for the Serb failure to withdraw all their weapons

from a 20-kilometre exclusion zone around the city.

"We have told Akashi that this excuse doesn't stand because they knew very well of the weather conditions and they hadn't been doing anything for seven days."

"I cannot say that I'm completely satisfied," he added. "But the job hasn't been completed and I especially feel and believe that it cannot be tolerated that the Serbs do not hand over the heavy weapons by midnight tonight."

Some of the tanks and heavy guns used by the Serbs to pound Sarajevo for 22 months were stuck in freezing temperatures on the bowl of hills around the Bosnian capital.

Mr. Akashi told reporters in Sarajevo: "Because of the weather, snow and road conditions, not all the weapons which have not been withdrawn outside the exclusion zone may be in actual control of the United Nations Protection Force by the end of the day."

When NATO set its deadline 10 days ago, the Serbs were given the choice of re-

closed-door session.

He gave no details of the talks which were held amid fears that Israel might launch a military strike in South Lebanon.

Both Israel and the United States urged Damascus and Beirut to intervene to curb resistance attacks.

"The Israeli government commits aggressive and terrorist acts against Lebanon and holds Syria and Lebanon responsible for escalating the situation in South Lebanon," the official Syrian newspaper Tishreen said Sunday.

"This means that Israel is still adopting the policy of aggression and that it is still too far from accepting the real and durable peace," it said.

Officials said earlier that Mr. Assad and Mr. Hrawi were expected to review the outcome of the Arab-Israeli peace talks which resumed in Washington last week after a 12-day break.

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Years later, thousands of Palestinians wait for home

By Hala Boncompagni
Agence France Presse

AIN HILWEH, Lebanon — Fawda Hamadeh and her 10 children are among thousands of families of displaced Palestinians who have been waiting since 1973 for a new place to call home.

The Hamadehs fled Palestine after Israel's creation in 1948 and lived in the Nabatieh refugee camp of South Lebanon until 1973 when they were forced out after their compound was obliterated in an Israeli attack.

They squatted in an old army barracks in the southern port of Sidon until November when the Lebanese authorities, as part

of a national plan to relocate 500,000 displaced Lebanese and Palestinians, moved them out.

The Palestinian squatters, like their Lebanese counterparts, were given a maximum compensation of \$5,000 but unlike the Lebanese the money was handed over to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to build new lodgings.

By June the Hamadehs will be getting the keys to a 49-square-metre apartment in 'Ain Hilweh, the largest of 12 refugee camps in Lebanon with a population of some 75,000 people.

The construction project is the first of its kind.

A total of 109 housing units are being built by Genico, a

company owned by the brother of Lebanon's billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, in 'Ain Hilweh, on the eastern outskirts of his home town of Sidon.

"We had a big row with UNRWA over this construction," said Abu Bassam, the public relations officer of popular committees that run every day life in 'Ain Hilweh.

"They wanted to build 60 one-room units for 120 families, with one bathroom per 10 families and a sink in each room for a kitchen," he said.

After arduous negotiations the popular committees convinced the UNRWA engineers to revise their plans and build self-contained lodgings for the families, ranging in size from 25 square metres

to 49 square metres.

"They agreed reluctantly and one of the engineers even told me that this way he would be losing 11 apartments," said Abu Bassam, and the deal was done.

The Hamadehs now eat, sleep and even shower in an unheated room of what once used to be a school run by UNRWA in Sidon.

Last year UNRWA launched several construction and rehabilitation projects in Palestinian refugee camps for some 6,000 displaced Palestinian families.

Eighty-five families who had been squatting in six buildings in the Lebanese capital since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon were

moved into two newly constructed buildings and 14 rehabilitated shelters, according to UNRWA.

Similar projects were carried out in the Burj Al Shamal camp near the southern port of Tyre.

But for most Palestinians displaced from Nabatieh, camps in Christian suburbs of Beirut and those whose shelters were destroyed in the Mich Mieh compound near 'Ain Hilweh, the problem remains.

Hundreds of them live in unsanitary conditions on the southern entrance of 'Ain Hilweh, in huts of corrugated iron surrounded by open sewers.

"If UNRWA was serious the problem could be re-

solved," said Samir Jomaa, secretary general of the popular committees here.

"So far we've only resolved the problem of 20 per cent of the displaced. What we really need is to expand the camps," he added.

He also charged that it was costing UNRWA only around \$2,500 to build the new lodgings, less than half the compensation sum allocated to squatters.

Mr. Jomaa and other Palestinian officials complained that there was a political tendency in Lebanon to neglect the refugees and displaced until a new map emerged in the Middle East from the peace talks with Israel.

Kabul cabinet proposes permanent peace formula

KABUL (AFP) — A special commission of Afghan cabinet members announced proposals Sunday to establish a permanent peace among the warring Afghan factions in Kabul, including a new assembly to pick a new president.

The proposals centre on the establishment of a special committee which will have two tasks: Securing a compromise agreement between the factions, and organising a loya jirga, or grand assembly, to elect a new president and cabinet.

A four-day ceasefire, which ended Friday, followed 45 days of non-stop fighting in the capital, but this ceasefire has yet to be extended to formalise the uneasy and unofficial truce currently enjoyed in Kabul.

The proposal for a loya jirga is a throwback to December 1992 when President Burhanuddin Rabbani was elected in a controversial assembly called the Shoorah Ahl-i-Hal va Aqd, the legality of which was challenged by some rival factions.

Whether called a loya jirga or Shoorah Ahl-i-Hal va Aqd, the idea is for a group to vote for the nation's leader.

The cabinet commission proposes that the loya jirga be convened within the next five

months, that is, by the end of Mr. Rabbani's current tenure as president.

Delegates elected to the loya jirga are to be respected personalities, including Muslim theologians, and political and social experts.

Whether former communists will be eligible to participate was not explained.

Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is allied with the ex-communist forces of Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who tried unsuccessfully to unseat Mr. Rabbani in the coup of January 1994.

Mr. Hekmatyar's successful military challenge to Mr. Rabbani's 1992 election as president won him the prime ministerial nomination in March 1993.

Mr. Rabbani's declaration of a holy war against Gen. Dostum may prove to be a sticking point for acceptance of the cabinet peace package if it means Gen. Dostum will be excluded.

Saturday night's two-to-three-hour exchange of heavy artillery and light weapons fire was an indication of the latent tension between the warring factions, regardless of their willingness to extend the expired ceasefire.

Israel is 'ready for prolonged nuclear war'

ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR might is far more awesome than had been thought and rivals that of the superpowers, according to a book just published in America.

The Israelis not only possess over 200 atom bombs — more than the U.K. They have also developed integrated nuclear war-fighting systems allowing their forces to survive a first strike. Some of Israel's arsenal might be knocked out, but enough would remain to guarantee fearsome reprisal.

Just in case the nuclear arsenal is insufficient, meanwhile, they have their own, locally-produced poison gas weapons, according to Critical Mass by William Burrows and Robert Windrem, which will shortly be published in the U.K. by Simon & Schuster.

Israel's atomic arsenal includes everything from nuclear artillery shells and atomic landmines for use against a Syrian tank attack on the Golan Heights (the holes have already been dug) to — almost certainly — hydrogen bombs for delivery by long-range Jericho missiles.

At least one type of warhead has even been miniaturised to fit into a suitcase — the ultimate terrorist weapon.

Although the broad outlines of Israel's nuclear potential have been known for some time, its full extent is disclosed

for the first time in Critical Mass. The message for Israel's enemies is clear, say the authors: "An atomic bomb dropped on Tel Aviv, or even several of them striking targets around the country, would cripple Israel but not forestall certain reflexive, horrifying reprisal by the nation's surviving forces."

Most of the country's atomic assets are within a triangle with its base along the Mediterranean and its apex at Jerusalem. They include the French-supplied reactor at Dimona in the northern Negev desert, which each year produces sufficient plutonium for ten bombs.

At Nahal Soreq, south of Tel Aviv, are a research reactor and nuclear weapons laboratories. A U.S. nuclear weapons designer is quoted as describing these as "the equivalent of our Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore and Oak Ridge National Laboratories."

Bombs are designed and assembled at a facility known as Division 20, on the outskirts of Haifa. Nearby is Division 48, a missile development laboratory. Military nuclear research is also undertaken at the Technion, the national science institute in Tel Aviv.

Near the Soreq complex is the Palmikim missile test range, and that in turn is close to Be'er Yaakov, where Jericho ballistic missiles are

produced in an underground facility. Command and control bunkers are located under Tel Aviv (the so-called "Bor" facility) and below ground at the Negev air base on the edge of the Negev.

Amongst the most sensitive of Israel's atomic sites are warhead storage bunkers at the Tel Nof air base in the northern Negev, and an adjoining field of Jericho missiles hidden below ground in the Judean hills just west of the town of Zakhariya.

The bunkers hold seventy nuclear bombs for delivery by the "black squadrons" — a unit of F-16 bombers which are maintained on 24-hour alert in underground revetments.

"By 1993," says Critical Mass, "bunkers for as many as fifty Jerichos were visible in even commercial satellite photos."

Another crucial bomb storage bunker is located near the village of Tirosh, close to the western edge of the missile field.

As a backup to all this, Israel will soon acquire two submarines capable of carrying nuclear-tipped cruise missiles resembling the U.S. Tomahawk missiles which the Americans used with such devastating effect against Iraq.

Israel's chemical weapons factory is sited five floors below ground at Dimona, says

Critical Mass, echoing claims which have been made before but which have never been proved.

This could prove particularly embarrassing to the Israelis, who last year signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, an international treaty banning the production or use of poison gas.

Until the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, when Israel's nuclear forces were put on a high state of alert after the simultaneous Egyptian and Syrian assaults on the Golan and in Sinai, "mutual annihilation was the worst-case scenario in Israel's war-fighting doctrine," says Critical Mass. Israel's strategists envisioned the final act as a kind of Middle Eastern Little Big Horn, with them as the Seventh Cavalry ... it was the equivalent of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)."

During the 1980s, Israel changed strategy as it realised the near-certainty that its adversaries, such as Iraq, would one day have atomic arsenals of their own. A more sophisticated doctrine emerged that required "the bomb" to be the centrepiece of a large, independent, technically advanced and highly integrated strategic and tactical nuclear weapons system ... Israel wanted the same kind of system the big boys had." — CAABU Bulletin.

Libya rolls up the welcome mat for foreigners

The following story was written during a trip to Libya by Reuters correspondent Abdul Aziz Barrowi shortly before Saturday's report from diplomats that Libya had arrested illegal African immigrants with a view to deporting them.

TRIPOLI — The Libyan eyed the black Africans, wearing the trademark balachava hats of poor immigrants here, as they sat on the side of the road.

"What are you waiting for?" the Libyan asked peremptorily.

"God willing, for jobs," said one of the Africans, a refugee from one of the African countries whose inhabitants in the past have looked to oil-rich Libya as a place where the streets are paved with gold.

But there are no more jobs for impoverished Africans, or even for well-off Western technicians and engineers, in colonel Muammar Qadhafi's shunned country.

Libya, its economy hurt by falling oil revenues and crippled by partial sanctions imposed by the U.N. for its failure to turn over two suspects to the West for trial in connection with the 1988 Lockerbie airliner bombing, has rolled up the welcome mat.

foreigners.

Tripoli-based diplomats said the measures could affect thousands of nationals from poor African countries such as Chad, Niger, Sudan and Mali whose presence beyond their visa expiration would have been overlooked in the past and most of whom are now in Libya illegally.

Even Egypt and North African states whose nationals flocked to Libya in the past are targeted.

Estimates of the number of aliens in Libya range up to about three million, including one million Egyptians, several thousand Asians and a like number of Western oil specialists. The number of Libyans is put at just over four million.

Economics — with Libya's main export oil now selling for some of the lowest prices in years — clearly plays a role, but there is an undercurrent of xenophobia as well.

Food shortages worsen in Kabul

KABUL (AP) — This battered capital is suffering perhaps its worst food shortage in Afghanistan's 15-year war, as heavy fighting and blockaded roads have reduced the city's food stocks to a bare minimum.

Bread, meat and other essentials are still available in the markets, but prices have skyrocketed beyond the reach of many ordinary residents, most of whom are jobless.

The United Nations and the International Committee for the Red Cross have both warned that food shortages could soon lead to starvation unless fresh supplies reach the beleaguered capital soon.

"No food or medicine is being allowed to go into Kabul," Peter Stocker, the head of the Red Cross delegation in Kabul, said during a brief visit to neighbouring Pakistan. "We estimate we have one to two weeks of food stocks left."

Afghans have proved amazingly resourceful during the country's long war, which now involves numerous factions battling for control of Kabul.

Much of the Central Asian nation is mountainous and barren, but there have been no major food crises. The extended family network has ensured that everyone manages to get enough to eat.

However, President Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces have been embroiled in a fierce battle with its rivals since Jan. 1, disrupting the food network in the capital.

Two major markets in Kabul have been destroyed by the fighting. Some 50,000 people are living in schools, mosques and other public buildings, dependent on handouts. Another 300,000 have been forced from their homes and have moved in with other families in Kabul, according to the Red Cross.

These two groups account for roughly half of the city's population.

Conditions worsened in recent days due to a blockade of the main roads leading into Kabul by one of Mr. Rabbani's enemies, Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Mr. Hekmatyar's forces control the eastern and southern outskirts of Kabul, including the all-important highway that leads to Pakistan, the traditional route for imported food supplies.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Assef Ali met with Mr. Hekmatyar on Friday in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad. Mr. Assef Ali said Mr. Hekmatyar agreed to let food supplies enter the capital, but there's no evidence yet that the situation has changed.

The blockade has not been airtight. Sometimes Mr. Hekmatyar's men allow truck drivers to pass for a fee.

"Food is still coming in," acknowledged Andreas Pfiffner, deputy head of the Red Cross in Kabul. But the Red Cross and the U.N. have halted their food convoys until they get guarantees of safe passage from the factions.

Meanwhile, Afghans survive thanks to the safety net of the extended family. Those making some money — shopkeepers, auto mechanics, and others providing essential goods — typically support large families that include less fortunate relatives.

Mohammad Gul, a 32-year-old security guard, said he and his brother, a bus driver, pool their two salaries to support more than 20 people currently staying in Mr. Gul's three-storey adobe home.

"They have some savings of their own, so we don't have to buy all their food," Mr. Gul said of his guests. "But we help out."

There is little hope the fighting will end soon. The factions fought for 13 years to oust a communist government in April 1992. Since then they have been feuding among themselves.

Mr. Rabbani's forces, commanded by Ahmad Shah Masoud, have proved themselves capable of withstanding the heavy assault by Mr. Hekmatyar and his ally, warlord Rashid Dostum. But the president's army does not have the strength to drive its enemies out of Kabul.

U.S. urges end to 'awful war' in Sudan

NAIROBI (AFP) — The U.S. ambassador in Khartoum, Donald Petterson, called Saturday for urgent action to end the "awful war" in southern Sudan, where the government has launched a new offensive against rebels.

Speaking in the neighbouring Kenyan capital after a two-day visit to areas hit by fresh government bombing, Mr. Petterson told journalists it was "imperative that everything possible be done to end this awful war."

"Washington has called for an immediate ceasefire, and I can only say that the plight of tens of thousands of civilians lends urgency to that call," he added.

U.N. agencies say more than 100,000 Sudanese are fleeing the latest onslaught on the drought-hit south, where fighting has disrupted food aid supplies.

Mr. Petterson said he regretted that Sudanese President General Omar Hassan Al Bashir had cancelled a visit to Nairobi on Friday to discuss the issue with the regional Inter-Governmental Organisation for Drought and Development (IGADD), currently headed by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi.

"I have no idea of the reasons of his not going. Obviously it's a disappointment that talks don't take place, in view of the suffering of people," he commented.

"The only good piece of news I have is that there have been no reported air raids hitting civilians since last Saturday. Let us hope that the calls for an end to the bombings that affect civilians have succeeded."

Khartoum has denied bombing civilian targets, insisting that all incidents involved either rebel factions or clashes between government forces and the leading rebel group, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Mr. Petterson said it was necessary to "look at both sides and ask whether everything has been done to end the war."

"You could ask whether military imperatives sometimes outweigh human concerns," he added.

He regretted the SPLA's division into two rival factions in 1991, saying it would "be more useful for the peace process for the SPLA to speak as one."

Mr. Petterson said he had no way of verifying SPLA reports

that Sudanese forces were crossing over into Zaïre and the Central African Republic to repel the rebels, a charge denied by both countries.

Khartoum assails U.S.

A senior government source on Sunday accused the United States of siding with the SPLA.

Last week's visit by Mr. Petterson had been carried out without permission and had been in violation of the country's national sovereignty, the source told the SUNA news agency. Mr. Petterson had overstepped his duties in making the visit, the agency said.

The government source added that the visit had coincided with efforts by the SPLA to secure the delivery of weapons and other war material.

The source said Mr. Petterson's visit represented "an open alignment by the United States with the rebel movement."

"It also comes within efforts to secure delivery of weapons and other war material to the Sudan People's Liberation Army," the official said.

He told SUNA that Mr. Petterson could have gotten government permission to tour the south

Russian guards hurt in clash on Afghan border

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian officer and two civilians died in an ambush near Dushanbe and a Russian guard post on the tense Tajik-Afghan border was shelled over the weekend, the ITAR-TASS news agency said.

It said gunmen opened fire on a vehicle carrying a 21-year-old lieutenant and three civilians near the Tajik capital Friday, killing the officer and two civilians. The third civilian was badly wounded, the dispatch said.

Early Sunday morning, a Russian-manned post on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan was shelled from the Afghan side, it said. A Russian border guard was seriously wounded and the post was damaged.

At a nearby post, another contingent of Russian border guards clashed with a small group of guerrilla fighters trying to cross the border from Afghanistan over the weekend, ITAR-TASS said.

Russia has both army troops and border guards in Tajikistan.

The General People's Congress (parliament) in January voted to expel anyone who had entered Libya illegally.

It ordered the government to gradually sack thousands of foreigners working as civil servants in Libyan public services and firms, mostly well-educated people like doctors, teachers and experts in various fields.

Diplomats say it has already detained hundreds of Africans as illegal immigrants, prior to sending them home. Most were from Chad, Niger and Mali.

There are, diplomats say, some 7,000 foreigners working for state-owned companies alone, or about 22 per cent of the workforce for those firms.

"We want to make places for Libyan workers and graduates," some of the 420 congress delegates said at the time.

The congress also banned new hiring of foreigners except "in rare specialties" and ordered Libyan embassies to be tough in issuing visas. It also imposed an entry tax for

"If there is a water shortage in Libya, it is because there are three million foreigners," an official tells journalists visiting a man-made river designed to bring water from underground reserves under the southern desert to the northern cities.

Libya has a long history of expelling foreigners. In 1984 and 1985 it ordered out tens of thousands of Tunisian and Egyptian workers at a time of worsening relations with the governments of their countries.

It also sent 1,000 Niger nationals packing in 1990.

Last November, Libya threatened to lay off thousands of Thai workers. It was apparently angry over Thailand's cooperation with the United States over fears that Thais were helping Libya build chemical weapons plants.

In another move intended to make foreigners feel less welcome, the congress made drinking alcoholic beverages punishable by fines of up to \$10,000 and a prison term as long as six months. Offenders may also be expelled.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Le Monde Sous Marin
18:30 Magazine Local
19:00 News in French
19:15 The weekly sport magazine
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The End Of A Brave Man
21:30 News in English
22:20 The Respected Family
22:30 The Cape Rebel
23:15 Night Court

PRAYER TIMES

04:51 Fajr
06:09 Sunrise (Sunrise) Duha
11:49 Dhur
14:59 Asr
17:29 Maghrib
18:46 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Svedfish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasana Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630551, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772611
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Lutheran Church Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

There is a chance of scattered showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom with winds becoming southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman 5 / 15
Aqaba 10 / 23
Djorah 4 / 16
Jordan Valley 10 / 21

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 14 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghaleb Zaidich 736011
Dr. Yousef Nasr 851124
Dr. Fakher Bilal 663412
Dr. Khalid Asfour 666873
Firas pharmacy 661912
Perdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 657025
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shneicani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBOD:

Dr. Fayez Al Oadi 248743
Alquray pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Haddad 982799
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 773121
Highway Police 845402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 641646
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100

HOSPITALS

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 98-52200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 98-52320

IRBOD:

Ramadan Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Rn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQAHA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)341111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)323000, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:10 Sanaa (RJ)
08:35 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Jeddah (RJ)
09:30 Riyadh (RJ)

09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 Beirut (RJ)
10:35 New Delhi (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00 Cairo (RJ)
18:45 Bangkok (RJ)
19:00 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:35 Cairo (MS)
10:00 Khartoum (SD)
12:25 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
18:45 Dubai (EM)
01:15 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:45 London (RJ)
12:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30 Dubai, Karachi (RJ)
20:45 Damascus (RJ)
21:50 Abu Dhabi Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:00 Istanbul (TA)
08:15 Cairo (MS)
10:25 Beirut (ME)
11:00 Khartoum (SD)
13:30 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GF)
19:45 Dubai (EM)
02:15 Amsterdam (KL)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 550 / 650
Banana (Mukammal) 680
Cabbage 140 / 70
Carrot 220 / 140
Cauliflower 70 / 40
Clementine 280 / 200
Cucumbers (large) 300 / 200
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 200
Eggplant 170 / 80
Garlic 900 / 800
Grape Fruit 200 / 150
Green beans 130 / 80
Lemon 1100 / 600
Marrow (large) 130 / 80
Marrow (small) 280 / 200
Olives (green) 700 / 500
Orange 460 / 150
Onion (dry) 350 / 300
Onion (green) 300 / 200
Pepper (hot) 240 / 180
Pepper (sweet) 380 / 280
Potato 380 / 280
Radish 140 / 80
Tomato 180 / 100
Spring beans 120 / 60

Queen to address international forum on issues facing rural women

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor will address the 1994 meeting of the International Steering Committee on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women which will be held in Brussels on Feb. 24 and 25.

The meeting will bring together 15 wives of heads of state or government from every region of the world, as well as heads of U.N. agencies and other international organisations, to review the progress that has been made on the implementation of the Geneva Declaration for rural women, to formulate strategies for continuous action, and to provide input to deliberations at the World Conference on Women which will be held in Beijing in 1995.

Queen Noor will provide overview of the main issues and challenges that face rural women in the five regions of the world, review action that has been taken in the countries to enhance development for rural women, and examine the partnership among all sectors involved in development including non-governmental organisations (NGO) and the donor community in initiating long-term development projects targeted at empowering rural women to take a more active, informed decision-making role in their own development.

The International Steering Committee was established as an advocacy group following the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women held in Geneva in 1992.

The summit focused international attention on the situation of rural women in the developing world, and stressed the need to provide on-going



support for their vital productive roles.

Following the summit, the Geneva Declaration was endorsed. It addressed the major areas in which support was required: national and international development and economic policies; equitable access to land and other productive natural resources; access to extension services, training and technology; access to credit and other basic financial services; and opportunities for

sharing in leadership and decision-making positions.

The International Steering Committee was formed to promote the implementation of the Geneva Declaration through the mobilisation of political will and public opinion, to encourage the promotion of national policies for rural women in every country, and to ensure political and financial support for rural women's efforts to enhance their quality of life.

Abdul Meguid says Arab League seeks Mideast peace in interest of all parties

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid Sunday discussed preparations for an Arab League foreign ministers meeting to be held in Cairo in March during a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

At Sunday's meeting, which was attended by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and Minister of State Fawaz Abul Ghanam, the Middle East peace process was reviewed.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, who arrived in Amman Saturday to attend the signing of the Yemeni reconciliation and reform agreement, said the Arab League was concerned with giving impetus to the peace process in order to achieve stability and security in the Middle East.

The Arab League, he added,

was doing everything in its power to help the peace process achieve its ends in the interest of all the peoples of the region.

Referring to the Yemeni reconciliation, Dr. Abdul Meguid said that the league greatly appreciates His Majesty King Hussein's role in helping end the dispute among the Yemeni leaders, saying he was glad to attend the signing ceremony.

Later Dr. Abdul Meguid met with Mr. Al Hassan to review Arab regional and international issues. The two officials discussed the peace process and the Arab League's role.

They also reviewed the prospect of stimulating the role of the Arab League in helping settle inter-Arab difficulties and the agenda of the coming Arab League foreign ministers meeting in Cairo.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday meets with Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid (Petra photo)



REVIEWING BILATERAL TIES: Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday receives Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Yusef Ben Alawi, who arrived in Amman Saturday to attend the signing of the reconciliation and reform agreement between the Yemeni leaders. The two officials reviewed means to further enhance bilateral relations (Petra photo)

Deputy urges end to hiring of foreign flight attendants

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Sameer Habashneh Sunday urged Royal Jordanian (RJ) to stop what he called the "unjustifiable" employment of foreigners as flight attendants.

Mr. Habashneh said the national carrier should replace its foreign staff with "qualified" unemployed Jordanian men and women whose applications for work are piled up at RJ's head office.

RJ Chief Executive Officer Mahmoud Balqez said that the airline "represents Jordan and Jordanian employees are preferred to and given priority over foreigners." But he said many reasons prevent the airline from exclusively employing Jordanian women as cabin attendants.

In response to a question by Mr. Habashneh on why many foreigners are employed in this sector at RJ, Mr. Balqez said Jordanian women shy away from joining the airline crew due to "social considerations." He said RJ tried to influence these considerations through media campaigns that aimed to "break the barrier" that

holds back Jordanian women from joining the airline.

But he said that the campaign was met with partial success as foreign flight attendants still form 30 per cent of overall staff members.

In a letter presented to the Lower House of Parliament by Minister of Transport Ateeb Halasa, Mr. Balqez said that technical considerations related to airline safety and other requirements that many Jordanian applicants lack prompted the carrier to hire foreign personnel.

Mr. Habashneh rejected Mr. Balqez's justification that Jordanian women abstain from applying for jobs at RJ for "social reasons," citing as evidence the "hundreds of applications on the 7th floor at RJ's head office." He added that there was nothing to account for paying foreign flight attendants \$700 more per month than local employees receive when RJ "can easily recruit Jordanians with the same qualifications."

Meanwhile, the House agreed to hold a "general discussion" of RJ next Sunday at the request of 16 lawmakers.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

Art exhibition by several artists at the Alia Art Gallery.

Plastic art exhibition by artist Khalil Al Kofahl at the Yarmouk University.

Photo exhibition by artist Latifa Youssef at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m. - midnight).

Book exhibition at the Jordan University for Women.

Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m. - midnight).

Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.

DRAMA

Drama in Arabic entitled "Hamlet Crucified Again" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

Lecture entitled "Excavation and Restoration at the Monastery of St. Lot at Deir 'Ain 'Abata" by Mr. Konstantinos D. Politis at the British Museum, at the Friends of Archaeology headquarters at 7:00 p.m.

Lecture in Arabic entitled "Zionism and Racism Are Two Sides of the Same Coin" by Mr. Laith Shihab at the Al Watan Cultural Club in Russeifah at 7:30 p.m.

MUSIC HOUR

Show of videotaped classical music on the Parisian fun — Bach at the student multi-purpose building at the University of Jordan (12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.).

FILMS

Short film in French entitled "Lakme" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

Film in French entitled "Don Giovanni" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

Film in Arabic entitled "It Is Not Like That" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

Film in Arabic entitled "The Chameleon" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

Survey says juvenile delinquency stems from ignorance, bad influences

AQABA (Petra) — A survey conducted in the Aqaba region by the Department of Social Development has revealed that ignorance and negative influences were mainly responsible for delinquency among the youth in Aqaba.

Juvenile delinquents were found to be responsible for 25 per cent of thefts and robberies committed in the port city, said a department statement.

Most of the offences were committed by youths aged 16 to 18, when the young often behave irresponsibly and like

to attract attention, said the statement.

The survey showed that lack of emotional support in families, the death of one or both parents, imprisonment, illness, unemployment, and other factors associated with broken homes were responsible for crime among youth, added the statement.

The survey was conducted to determine the reasons for and the volume of juvenile delinquency and to help plan solutions to youth problems, said

the statement.

It noted that the survey was conducted through the help of the local police department, the Juvenile Reformatory Centre, in Ma'an and Aqaba, and the Aqaba Court.

The statement, which said that the survey results clearly show that delinquency reflected poor child-raising practices, recommended stimulating the role of youth centres to help young people utilise their free time to their developmental benefit.

UNESCO to submit findings on handicapped to June international conference in Spain

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) office here Sunday said that it plans to submit information about rehabilitating and educating handicapped people in Jordan to an international conference to be held in Spain in June.

In a letter sent to the Ministry of Social Development UNESCO said that it appreciated the ministry's facilities in help-

ing the U.N. agency collect the required information on the handicapped through questionnaires recently distributed throughout the Kingdom.

The ministry published and distributed the questionnaires in cooperation with UNESCO in order to determine the extent of vocational, educational and special education services provided to the handicapped and programmes to incorporate them in the community.

Also Sunday the ministry announced that a letter was received from the Canadian embassy in Amman voicing its appreciation for the implementation of a project targeting needy families in Al Ranieh village in Mafraq Governorate.

The embassy had provided JD20,000 towards promoting cattle-breeding in the village, a project carried out in cooperation with the ministry.

Fire next door holds victims, Jordan Times staff in suspense

By Ica Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A house on fire in the winter in Jordan, with no victims, would normally pass with little notice. After all, so many times people ignore advice, warnings or stories heard on the grapevine on how easily fires start at times.

But when you witness one, as we, members of the staff of the Jordan Times, did yesterday, in the building next door, then a story might be told, or has to be told.

At about 4:45 p.m. smoke started billowing from the windows of the upper floor of the four-storey stone apartment building adjacent to this newspaper's offices. Workers in the neighbouring yard started shouting to alert somebody, everybody, the right person(s).

Our journalists (hopefully alert for this kind of situation) immediately called the fire department. About half an hour later (no exaggeration) a fire engine showed up. Alas, it was on the wrong side of University Road which is divided by an island, stretches the distance from the Al Ra'i building to the far end of University of Jordan and back.

It took the snail-paced machine another ten minutes to reappear and a few more crucial minutes to slowly manoeuvre its way towards the wall surrounding the building afflicted by fire.

The guest Arab workers did more than their fair share of a job the "well-trained" firefighters were supposed to do on their own, including clearing the way for the engine to inch its way and helping with the water hose.

After the hose was taken to the upper floor and the clearly unprotected firemen came back running to connect it to the engine, they discovered that it was the wrong side of the hose.

Up and down went our well-drilled firemen (four in fact, including the "supervising" officer). But finally they connected the hose.

A moment or two of suspense passed as we were preparing to see the long-awaited moment when the water would start flowing. But a few more minutes lapsed fruitlessly.

By now nearly 45 minutes had passed during which terrified neighbours crowded their balconies.

Fortunately, though, one of our support staff, Raed Musa Nowar, had already entered the house, crawled on the floor to the gas cylinder

which was not shut off, gone to the balcony and opened the window.

Efficient and very courageous for a man who never wore a uniform, we should think. At least faster than those who needed to be so.

Many minutes later an ambulance showed up. In time to pick up casualties, we feared.

Luckily however, nobody was hurt in the fire, and it was eventually put out. A happy ending, except that everything in the apartment was consumed by fire and the families living on that floor broke their fast on ... water, what else. Nothing, it seems, was edible as smoot had covered everything.

Drills be done, but apparently by the firemen themselves, before ordinary

citizens should be required to do so. Fire-proof clothing and masks should be a must. The worst should be assumed; a fire is not a picnic, after all.

A lesson was learnt? We certainly hope so. But if not, we will wait for Wednesday, when a national conference on public safety will be held, not very far from the building that was nearly all gutted by a fire that was started by a lady who kept her food cooking on a gas stove and left the house.

Incidentally, nobody in the building thought of switching the electricity off upon hearing the news of a fire about the house. It took an outsider (a colleague again) to pull the lever down and hope some damage would be prevented that way.



Raed Musa Nowar (Photo by Abdullah Azzoub)

Jordan Times

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Time for law is now

IT IS a healthy development for our democratisation process that 21 deputies have now called on the government to submit a new draft law on national elections. The last change on the electoral law was introduced in literally the 11th hour before the last Parliament elections, culminating in the incorporation of the controversial one-man, one-vote formula. Other deficiencies in the original law of 1986 were left without proper redress due to, among other considerations, the pressure of time. The incomplete work on that crucial piece of legislation was also due to the fact that the 1993 amendment was articulated and adopted in the absence of any parliamentary debate and passed as a temporary law by the Cabinet while parliament was in a recess.

Given the fact that the electoral law is the very foundation on which any operational democracy can hope to function, it would seem timely to start afresh with a broad review of the existing legislation. Any such effort, however, needs to be comprehensive and not piecemeal in its methodology or purpose.

Instead of waiting till the last months of Parliament's lifetime, now is the time to begin the process of correcting the current omissions in the law on elections. By way of examples, politicians can list several key issues that require additional reflection and scrutiny. On top of the list they could mention the other dimension of the one-man, one-vote system which has escaped the serious attention of the government, namely, to provide voters equal voting rights by drawing the boundaries of electoral districts on the basis of population density. The archaic criteria that are still being observed in the country give unequal voting rights to citizens by assigning unequal number of parliamentary seats to the same number of people on the basis of other grounds that are unacceptable to true democracies.

Other concerns that require attention include minority rights; the way minorities in Jordan are treated leaves much to be desired. Minorities are supposed to enjoy cultural, linguistic, religious and political rights, and we wonder if the current Election Law deals with this issue in a proper manner. We are not suggesting that minorities are ill treated. As a matter of fact, the present Election Law safeguards the political representations of minority religions and, in this sense, goes beyond what current international human rights instruments call for. Still, minority issues have other dimensions that any new law must deal with. For instance, we do not think minorities should have allocated seats in Parliament as a way of guaranteeing them representation and rights. These can be safeguarded by other means that need to be seriously debated first and approved later.

To be sure, there are other, no less important, issues and considerations that need to be tackled by both the Parliament and government when the real debate begins. That is why in fact the sooner the process of debate begins the better. The 21 parliamentarians who have taken the initiative in this regard deserve to be complemented for their timely move. We certainly do not want to wait till the end of the term of this Parliament before work on the new legislation begins.

If efforts to change the law are left until the last moment, like the case was last year, tempers will flare and narrow constituency considerations will prevail, making the task of being objective and fair so much more difficult for everybody concerned.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE EYES of the Arab masses are turned towards Amman where the Yemeni leaders meet Sunday to sign a reconciliation and reform agreement to end the dispute among them over political, social and economic matters in their country, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday. Perhaps the Jordanians, more than other Arab people, take pride in this event occurring in their capital and no doubt their delight over the reconciliation among the Arab leaders reflect the true feelings of His Majesty King Hussein, who spared no effort towards the attainment of this objective and towards preserving unity among Yemeni brothers, said the daily.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i reflected on the work of engineers in Jordan, saying that their number is now estimated to be 30,000, with more students oriented towards engineering professions. Salah Jarrar said that in Jordan, there are at least two universities: The Jordan University of Science and Technology and the Applied Sciences University, in addition to a number of community colleges specialising in some kind of engineering. Yet it is noticed that whenever a machine breaks down and whenever proper maintenance of equipment is needed by a firm or factory, seldom any engineer can be found to do the job, said the writer. Also, whenever a spare part is needed for a broken machine none can be manufactured. Jordan and the concerned firm awaits the new shipments, replacements coming from Europe and other countries, he added.

The lost tribe of the last land

By Walid Al Fahoum

The writer, of the Nazareth-based Arab Association for Human Rights, is former deputy mayor of Nazareth. The following is a paper he submitted to an international symposium on Trans Mediterranean Interdependence and Partnership which was held in Rome last month.

I COME from Nazareth, the city of the holy land where Jesus Christ lived his life, and one that is considered the capital of the Israeli-Palestinian Arabs who hold Israeli passports since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. This state insists on calling itself the state of the Jews, rather than one for all its inhabitants.

When Israel was created as a state, its Arab inhabitants were estimated at 149,000 but now they have grown into 800,000 citizens, which means that in nearly five decades they have multiplied five fold. Indeed, they can be rightly considered as the lost tribe because the world does not give them due recognition, neither does any country care to mention their existence or wants to learn about their problems. No one considers them a national minority or natives of Palestine.

The Palestinian minority living in Israel since 1948 are marginalised by the Jewish state in political, social, educational and economic fields and are being discriminated against, legally in some cases, in what we call overt discrimination and sometimes tacitly in what we call covert discrimination.

To back the discrimination system, the Israelis have enacted more than 30 laws like the absent land owners law of 1950, which has enabled the Israeli governments to systematically seize all Arab lands whose owners had left the country in 1948. The same law prevented other owners, who had not left their homeland but had moved from original villages to other areas within the state of Israel, from returning home.

The 1950 law, together with the nationality law of 1952 and the military service law of 1956, are mere examples of overt discrimination against the Arab population of Israel.

The 1953 law on education and the 1984 on the Knesset (Israel's parliament) stipulate that no Arab can run as a candidate in a general election unless he or his political group recognises Israel as the state of the Jews. It should be noted here that recognition is not of the state of Israel, but rather of the state as being solely state of the Jews.

Furthermore, an Israeli law on national insurance, which links allocations and allowances for children to national service, provides for allocations for the Jewish children to receive double the amount earmarked for the Arab children. This is an example of the so-called covert discrimination.

The Palestinian minority has lived within the boundaries of Israel and under Israeli military rule until the year 1966. The

Arab inhabitants were confined to closed zones and were only allowed to go in or out of their territory through special permits.

This regime has resulted in destructive consequences both to the Arab inhabitants and their lands.

The 1948-1966 period brought about the emergence of a small group of Arab citizens who opted to serve as agents for the Israeli authorities.

The Israelis have in addition deprived the majority of the Arab population of the right of developing their lands which also led to the seizure of Arab land. According to statistics, the Palestinian Arabs living in Israel since 1948 merely own on 4.5 per cent of the total area of land within the state of Israel, with the Arab population accounting for only 17 per cent of the population, down from 67 per cent in 1948.

After losing their lands, the Arab inhabitants could not be considered as an agricultural community, neither were they developed and organised as workers in other fields. They have been living on the periphery of the Israeli agricultural sector and not recognised as part of the workers community either.

There is no doubt that these Israeli measures against the Palestinians led to very damaging effect on the infrastructure, causing Arab industry to remain backward.

As to the Palestinian bedouins, Israel was keen on moving them from their lands to urban areas thus causing demographic changes prior to stealing the bedouin land.

Palestine has been inhabited over the past 10,000 years and has witnessed civilisations rise and fall including the Canaanites, our ancestors. It is an established historical fact that we are a small minority of people living within a state — the Jewish state and facing problems with the Arab Nation and also with the Palestinian kinsmen. This minority can best be described as the "lost tribe".

Before 1948, the Palestinians lived in 478 towns and villages, of which 370 have been partially or totally destroyed by the Israelis after the 1948 war and the Arab inhabitants have never been able to return to their lands and homes. Indeed, some people, whose villages were totally destroyed, live a few kilometres away from their original homes like those of the villages of Safourieh, Mujeidei and Maaloul — three villages close to the city of Nazareth. These inhabitants are considered absent land owners despite the fact that they still exist in the state of Israel and carry Israeli identity cards.

These are displaced citizens who were forced out of their lands and homes in 1948. Originally, they were estimated at 81,000 but now they are estimated to have multiplied five times.

Israel does not recognise 120 Arab villages inhabited by 50,000 people and so they are forced to live the life of 10th century, without electricity, running water, roads, schools, health utilities. They live in constant fear of their homes being

demolished or confiscated by the Israeli authorities. We are living an era of ethnic and religious minorities. This is a world wide problem that can only be solved through activating the basic human rights principles.

We believe that there can be no peace without social, economic and political justice to all minorities. Indeed, ethnic or religious minorities constitute a powder keg that is apt to go off as a result of continued repression, like that which occurred in Europe. It is rather difficult to predict when and where the explosions might occur.

It was not possible to predict the 158 events when the Arabs of a Galilee and Nazareth clashed with the Israeli forces. Likewise, it was not possible for any one to foresee the 1960 events when five Arab youths were killed near Gaza and in the 1976 "Land Day", when Arab-owned lands were confiscated and in 1983 when Israeli authorities demolished 15 homes in Taybeh town as well as the massacre that occurred in 1990 at Rishon Litzion and another that occurred in Al Aqsa Mosque of Jerusalem in 1990.

It is hard to predict what could emerge from the PLO-Israeli declaration of principles, signed in Washington last September, and its impact on the identity of Palestinians living under Israeli rule since 1948.

The problem of this sector of the Palestinian people is an integral part of the whole Palestinian issue. I say to Europe that it bears a responsibility towards seeing justice done under the current "new world disorder".

Article 18 of the declaration issued by the conference by European parliaments and non-governmental organisations, held by mid 1988, calls for the countries of the northern hemisphere to help implement principles and rules as stated under the 1951 Geneva Pact regarding the legal status of refugees and displaced persons. The article provides for the protection of refugees from the Third World and ensuring their safe repatriation.

We call on the Europeans to work in the spirit of that declaration and ensure the safe return of the Palestinian refugees or compensating those not wishing to return home as called for by the United Nations.

Europe, in general, and Britain, in particular, hold special responsibility towards the Palestinians as Britain was entrusted with a mandate to rule Palestine until 1948. Germany, too has a social responsibility because it is responsible for the Nazi atrocities that partly led to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. We are the victims and we are the lost tribe that has been forgotten by the World.

As a chapter of the Arab association for human rights in Nazareth, we call on this seminar to take what I have just outlined seriously and to pass decisions clearly addressing our plight. As an ethnic Palestinian group in Israel, we feel that we do not have a safe and secure future.

The world does not need a U.S.-Japanese divorce

By Philip Bowring

HONG KONG — Asian reaction to the breakdown of U.S.-Japanese trade talks has been muted. Editorialists have expressed sorrow, not anger. Stock markets have taken a knock, but a modest one by recent volatile standards. Yet deeper down there is that tension that comes with not knowing what to expect next.

Nothing dramatic is likely to happen soon. But at the very least, nations have to consider the consequences of U.S.-Japanese frictions for themselves, and contemplate difficult choices should those deteriorate.

Last year's debates over the respective merits of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the East Asian Economic Caucus may appear less theoretical than they did then.

There is something visceral in Washington's attitude to Japan that cannot be explained either by trade specifics or by the economic outlook. Thanks to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Asia may have misread the depth of antipathy toward Japan which exists in some influential quarters in the United States. Bill Clinton has taken the lid off this box of emotions by laying down targets that are not only impractical but contrary to traditional U.S. aversion to managed trade.

Mr. Clinton, the opportunist politician, may find it hard to put the lid back when he wants to. Logic is certainly missing from the present situation.

There is no doubt that the Japanese overall current account surplus of \$130 billion is unsustainable, as is a \$50 billion trade surplus with the United States. There is no doubt either that Japan's economy needs further stimulus if it is to enjoy a domestic demand recovery. Nor doubt that some of its markets have yet to be priced open. But this is a curious time for the United States to choose to threaten trade war.

The U.S. economy is recovering, jobs are being created. U.S. firms are widely acknowledged to have enhanced their international competitiveness — through cost cutting, investment and technological excellence and not simply because of a weak dollar.

The Japanese surplus has probably peaked (despite low oil prices). Inflated last year by the rise of the yen, this year it should contract as export volumes are pressured

by lack of competitiveness. Further yen strength will simply delay recovery in domestic demand. Nor will foreign threats do much to help Morihiro Hosokawa's reform and stimulus efforts.

Strong U.S. action a year ago would have been more rational than today. Now it almost looks as if the United States is kicking Japan when it is down — revenge for insults that flowed the other way two years ago.

It is in this sense that the United States is being driven by its gut and not its head that is worrying others. Many in Asia are sympathetic toward U.S. complaints about Japan, feel that Japan deserves to be taught a trade lesson, yet worry deeply about the consequences of emotional and unilateral actions.

After all, the Bill Clinton now threatening Japan with sanctions is the same Clinton who was supposed to be so strongly behind multilateralism on trade as evidenced by efforts to conclude the Uruguay Round. This is the same Clinton who three months ago was hosting the APEC summit in Seattle, proclaiming the need for greater multilateral trade cooperation across the Pacific.

The Clinton who professes to believe in free trade and macroeconomic objectives is the same one who wants to impose numerical targets on specific sectors when it is the totality of trade that matters.

In the short term, other Asian countries may well benefit from Japan's discomfiture. Korean and Taiwan companies are already exploiting the damage that the high yen is causing Japanese competitiveness. Southeast Asian subsidiaries of Japanese firms will do more exporting to the United States due to lower costs, while corporate Japan seeks all conceivable ways of reducing its surplus.

But the longer-term impact on Asia will be highly disadvantageous. Japan may seem the villain for now, but the United States has other trading partners in Asia whose trade is as lopsided and which have much more obvious barriers to imports than does Japan. China is the most obvious. Korea is still an almost closed market for items such as cars. Add in the human rights issues, and the potential for new trade barriers against East Asia is formidable.

In so far as the East Asian economies are linked, with Japan as supplier of capital

and intermediate goods and the United States being the buyer of last resort for end products, any action against Japan will have eventual knock-on effect. This would not be as great now as 10 years ago, when a higher proportion of Asian exports went to U.S. markets, and before non-Japanese Asian brand names established themselves in the West. But it is still a very real concern.

Friction with Japan will add to the relative merits of Latin America over Asia as a location for investment and product sourcing. Thanks to the North American Free Trade Agreement and bilateral pacts, Latin America will enjoy significant non-tariff advantages over Asian producers — and political weight in the United States.

Much though it may in theory want to, the United States cannot isolate its trade relationship with Japan from those elsewhere in Asia. Likewise, if Asian countries see the trans-Pacific relationship deteriorating they will look more seriously at the proposal of Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Mohammad for an East Asian Economic Caucus.

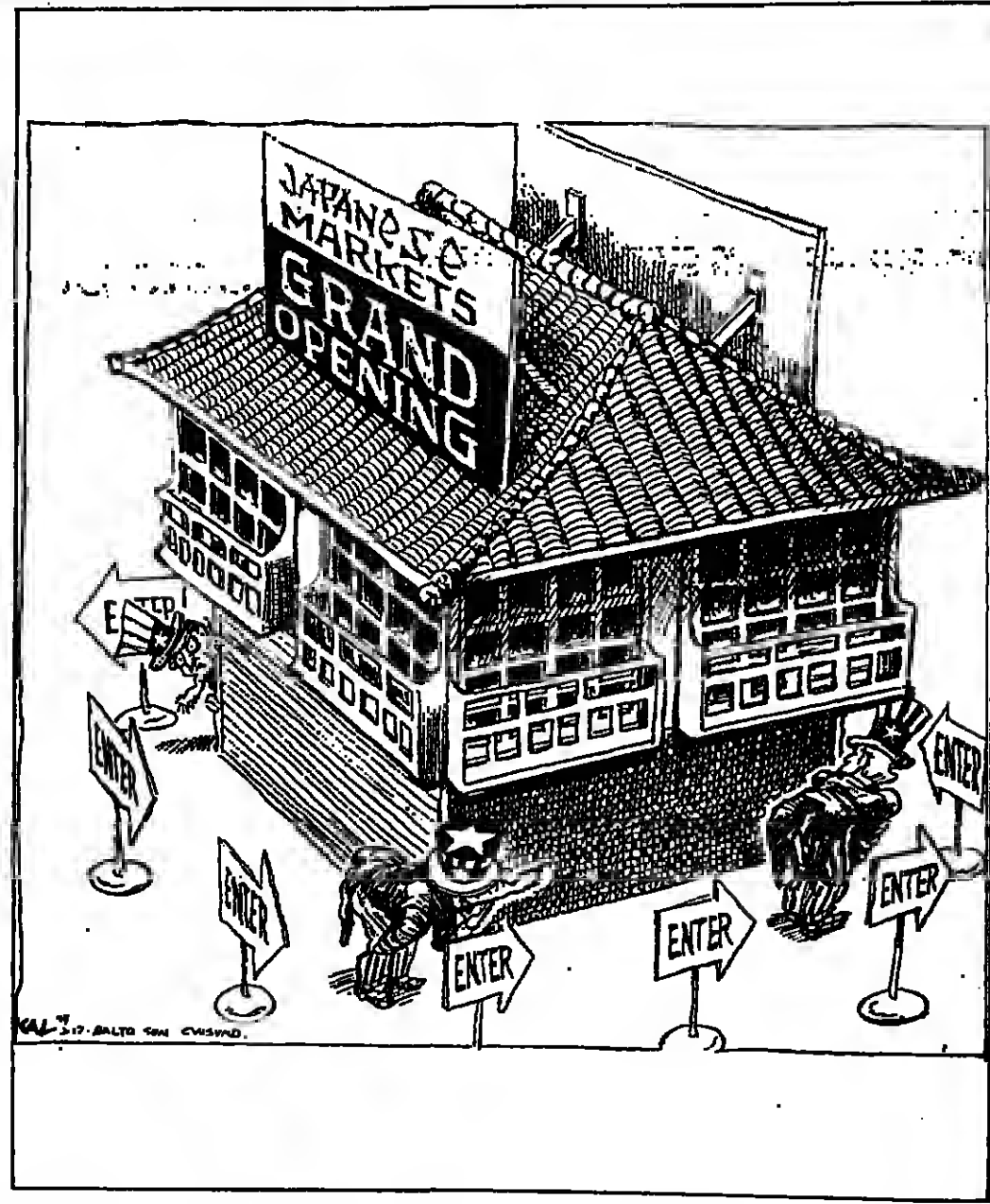
At present, they are far too dependent on the U.S. market to annoy a prickly Washington. At the same time, however, they rely heavily on Japan for capital. Logic dictates therefore that if there is friction across the Pacific, they will want to strengthen their trade ties with Japan, which will anyway develop naturally from an over-strong yen.

Nor, despite the rhetoric, can trade be isolated from security. Given the importance of the U.S. presence to regional stability, that is another reason for Asian anxiety.

Without the timely alarms provided by the prospect of a North Korean bomb and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's musings, U.S. force reductions might be more imminent that is now the case. But the flag follows trade — not vice versa. Weakening of the trade relationship will erode the security one. That will happen over time anyway, but it needs to be controlled and gradual if it is not to be disruptive.

There is a gut instinct abroad that Mr. Clinton and Mr. Hosokawa, both politically weak, could lose control of events. That, not trade numbers, is the worry.

International Herald Tribune.



Washington short of Japan experts

By Gregory Clark

TOKYO — To anyone who knows Japan, or world trade, the demand that Tokyo set numerical targets for imports from the United States is laughable.

Import targets fly in the face of recent GATT, APEC and NAFTA rhetoric. And what happens if other countries in trade deficit with Japan also demand fixed shares of Japan's market for imported goods?

To apply the targets, bureaucrats would have to strengthen control over the economy. Yet weakening bureaucratic control in Japan is supposed to be a major Clinton administration goal.

The administration would no doubt argue that Japan is already so inordinately bureaucrat-controlled and anti-free-trade that a headline approach is the only approach. This is fantasy talk, the result of reading too many half-backed anti-Japanese tracts.

In some areas the Japanese market is indeed closed. Bureaucratic collusion is one reason, but a much larger problem is incestuous private

deals. In other areas Japan is more open than most countries. Overall, it is probably not much worse in this respect than France.

U.S. exporters fail in Japan mainly because they do not try hard enough. In advance of the Hosokawa-Clinton talks, the U.S. timber export industry ran an advertisement here appealing for a fairer deal. The ad was well written and closely argued.

The only problem was that it never got to be read by the Japanese. For convenience and to save money it was run in a small-circulation, English-language newspaper.

To succeed in Japan you need more than convenient gimmicks. You need to do your homework, show commitment for the long haul. You need to spend money. Above all, you need to realise that most people here operate in Japanese, not English.

The United States is right to want to act on the trade deficit. Encouragement for yen appreciation is one possible move, but at this stage it would probably send the frail

Japanese economy into a tailspin. A better move just now would be to ask Japan for "voluntary" reductions in exports of specific goods, a policy that has worked well in the past.

Unfortunately, Washington is too caught up in its own free trade rhetoric to realise that cutting exports from Japan is much easier and fairer than trying suddenly to expand exports into Japan.

It is also wasting time and energy telling Tokyo to cut taxes to reflate the economy. Tax cuts may work in consumption-happy societies like America's, but in Japan other and more drastic measures are needed.

The United States would do a lot better if it stopped trying to impose its own values and remedies and concentrated on getting more expertise about Japan. The Japanese press is full of accounts of bumbling by Washington's trade negotiators here in recent weeks. The current confrontation can only work to the benefit of the hawks, of both sides.

International Herald Tribune.

By Terence Hunt
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After a frustrating year of setbacks and criticism, U.S. President Bill Clinton seems to have helped slow the war in Bosnia with the threat of NATO air strikes. But there's sober recognition in the White House that it's just one step that could be quickly reversed.

Under threat of attack, Bosnian Serbs pledged to meet NATO's deadline of 0001 GMT Monday (1 a.m. Monday Sarajevo time) for their heavy guns to be withdrawn or put under U.N. supervision.

No one's pretending, though, there's going to be a sudden end to the 22-month war that has claimed an estimated 200,000 lives.

There's nothing to prevent the Serbs from moving their weapons to other sites in Bosnia where fighting is under way, and there's a long trail of broken cease-fires.

Mr. Clinton, in his weekly radio address, said the threatened air strikes will help bring peace.

"Military force alone cannot guarantee that every heavy gun around Sarajevo will be removed or silenced," the president said. "But military force can make it more likely that Bosnian Serbs will seek a solution through negotiation rather than through Sarajevo's strangulation and that more innocent civilians will continue to live."

Mr. Clinton said there were encouraging signs that NATO's ultimatum was working. But, as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher observed, "the Serbs have disappointed us many times before."

"At best, it's an interim step," White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said of the Serbs' withdrawal. "I don't think anybody will stand up and declare victory."

"At least the attacks on innocent civilians like we saw in the market will be stopped for a while and maybe a long while," she said.



The lingering threat

NATO's air strike warning against Serbs is first step that could be reversed

The possible use of American warplanes — and the risk that carries for U.S. pilots — would not have ended by Sunday. If Serb guns are detected, say, three weeks from now within the demilitarized zone, they still would be subject without warning to NATO attack.

For most of his administration, Mr. Clinton has been reluctant to put the United States in an aggressive leadership role. "His approval rating is still quite high," said Norman Ornstein, a political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute.

"When you look at the ups and downs (in the polls) it would be hard to get any significant correlation" between Bosnia and Mr. Clinton's ratings.

"Nobody in America knows where Bosnia is," said Republican pollster Bill McInturf. "Nobody's focusing on the issue beyond, 'gee, it's too bad

Clinton said Saturday. "Europe must bear most of the responsibility for solving this problem and indeed it has."

There has been no shortage of critics accusing Mr. Clinton of vacillation. Curiously, none of the debate has had much of a political impact on Mr. Clinton — perhaps explaining why he's been reluctant to put the United States in an aggressive leadership role.

"His approval rating is still quite high," said Norman Ornstein, a political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute. "When you look at the ups and downs (in the polls) it would be hard to get any significant correlation" between Bosnia and Mr. Clinton's ratings.

"Nobody in America knows where Bosnia is," said Republican pollster Bill McInturf. "Nobody's focusing on the issue beyond, 'gee, it's too bad

these guys are slaughtering each other. There's no constituency for dramatic action in Bosnia. Nobody has been spending the time and effort explaining what U.S. interests are."

"The American public is not very much engaged in this issue," agreed Democratic pollster Mark Mellman. "If we were to use American force you would see a rally-around-the-flag effect but it would be fairly temporary as it was with George Bush after the war against Iraq."

The administration hopes NATO's threat will energize Bosnia's troubled peace talks, which resume next month in Geneva. "You cannot separate power and diplomacy," a senior administration official said.

But the White House acknowledges that peace prospects are fragile.

Jordan's defendable case

By Waleed Sadi

JORDAN HAS a date with the International Human Rights Committee (HRC) on March 22 and 23 of this year to present its third periodic report on its commitments and obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The two previous encounters with the committee proved inconclusive in the sense that many questions remained unanswered. The idea behind submitting periodic reports to the 18-member tribunal is to update the information on the country's human rights developments and fill in the gaps of previous sessions.

It is noteworthy to recall that the HRC is unlike other United Nations human rights for a in the sense that its methods of work is not parliamentary in style but close to the working of a judicial body where the issues are dissected and analysed in a judicious manner on the basis of law and practice.

No wonder the members of this body include mostly jurists who have developed long expertise in interpreting and examining international conventions and treaties. Against this backdrop, the tribunal, which will be hearing Jordan's third report, does not expect rhetorical submissions but rather a systematic presentation based on fact and law very carefully and meticulously documented. It would be wrong, therefore, to rely on diplomats to engage the human rights body in the painstaking dialogue, since diplomats are not very well versed in the nitty-gritty aspects of the country's legislations and practices. The rule of thumb in this regard is to dismiss the submissions of diplomats as either inaccurate or propagandist.

What then can Jordan's delegation, that has the rendezvous with the HRC in March, expect from its dialogue with its human rights experts?

The first thing that our side can anticipate is the usual and chronic question about the status of the ICCPR in Jordanian laws. Paragraph 1 of Article 2 of the Covenant stipulates that "each state party... undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognised in the present Covenant, without any distinction of any kind." Paragraph 2 of the same article is even more explicit about the need to incorporate the provisions of the Covenant in domestic laws. It reads as follows: "Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, each state party to the present Covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional process and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognised in the present Covenant."

These legally binding principles have been interpreted by the committee as imposing on each and every state party an option either to incorporate the same provisions of the Covenant into its domestic laws or to amend its existing laws in order to give them specific effect. Should there be a discrepancy between municipal law and the terms of the ICCPR, prior to the completion of the process calling for giving explicit legal effect to the provisions of the ICCPR, the well developed jurisprudence of the committee calls for giving the Covenant articles precedence over domestic laws including its organic law.

This is where Jordan may encounter difficulties because now the status of the ICCPR has not been specifically settled with iron clad assurances.

In the second periodic report submitted to the committee in 1991, the leader of Jordan's delegation, the Minister of Interior Mr. Salameh Hamad, pointedly confirmed to the members of the committee what the written report had stated, namely, that by virtue of a 1982 Supreme Court decision, international treaties that Jordan has ratified have legal precedence over local laws but not over the Constitution. Yet there was no information that the Covenant itself was ever ruled as enjoying priority over other domestic laws. This is not to mention that from the committee's stand point, even constitutions must comply with the Covenant.

Still, Jordan has not moved to endorse and incorporate the very provisions of the Covenant into its body of laws as yet. The normal submission that the Constitution of the land and the other domestic legislations embody the principles of the ICCPR has never been accepted as satisfactory since it remained a state subjective judgement that this is really the case unless of course the very wording of the Covenant's articles are shown to be fully reflected in the law books of the country.

Human Rights File

In its third periodic report, which is due for consideration this spring, the reference to this point could be even less satisfactory from the Committee's point of view since there is no a proviso added to the earlier submission that makes the superiority of the Covenant over domestic laws contingent on not interfering with state security. This line of approach is usually rejected by the members of the HRC and we better be prepared to face this problem when our people defend Jordan's report in March.

To be sure there will be other issues on the mind of the Committee members, mostly centred on the fairness of trials, length of detentions and arrests before trials, discrimination, if any, against women, and freedom of thought and religion. Some members, who are well known abolitionists when it comes to capital punishment, would surely express their concern about the carrying of the death sentence in the country. Others would still want to know why martial law system remained in effect for so long and what are the status of the special courts still operating in the Kingdom.

With all fairness, Jordan cannot expect to emerge scot free of all criticism on all counts. But it is also fair to say that the reports and submissions of even the most advanced nations of the world suffer from major deficiencies. Jordan can expect to receive high marks for its democratic process, which is the foundation for the enjoyment of civil and political rights. I would not be shy to defending the country's effective measures in defence of law and order or even its application of the death penalty in certain category of very serious crimes. Our delegation can afford also to be candid about the incompleteness of the process for the incorporation of all the provisions of the Covenant. Frankness in such circumstances is always a welcome news especially when the overall situation is more than satisfactory.

Yemeni leaders sign agreement

(Continued from page 1)

ment; former prime ministers, the King's advisors and senior officials as well as Arab ambassadors also attended the event.

Yemeni sources said meanwhile agreement on modalities of implementing the reconciliation accord was not yet reached among the various parties involved. They said late-night talks produced "some progress" and "certain proposals" were to be presented to Mr. Beidh, who arrived here less than one hour before the signing ceremony.

King Hussein, who hosted an affair for the Yemeni leaders and the delegations accompanying them after the signing ceremony, was expected to meet with Mr. Beidh in a bid to persuade him to proceed to Sana'a from Amman and assume office as vice president.

Mr. Beidh, who stormed out of Sana'a in August and remained in his stronghold of Aden in the south after refusing to assume his constitutional

duties, was reportedly insisting that he would return to the federal capital only after the government shows tangible progress in implementing the agreement.

Yemeni sources said the King, Crown Prince Hassan, President Saleh, Vice-President Beidh, Mr. Arafat and Mr. Beo Alawi as well as Yemeni Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, Dr. Majali, a few senior Yemeni politicians and senior aides of King Hussein held a short meeting followed by a closed-door meeting among the King, Mr. Arafat, Mr. Saleh, Mr. Beidh and Mr. Attas.

The sources said Mr. Beidh had delayed his departure until Monday morning, but it was not immediately clear whether he had agreed to return to Sana'a.

Unconfirmed reports said King Hussein, in a goodwill gesture, was offering to fly Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh in his private plane to Sana'a, and remain in the Yemeni capital for one day.

Debate put off on draft tenancy law

(Continued from page 1)

IAF spokesman Hamzeh Mansour said the stand of deputies Kofahi, Saad and Abu Zant does not represent that of the IAF. The front has not reached a consensus on the issue, Mr. Mansour said, rejecting insinuations by Mr. Haddad that the drive to amend article five of the law was to serve the interests of the "rich against the poor."

"Wealthy and poor Jordanians are equal citizens," Mr. Mansour said. Deputy Ali Abul Ragheb agreed that wealthy and poor Jordanians are equal citizens, adding that the landlords and tenants law should be discussed in an objective manner that would bring justice to all. It is not necessarily true that all

landlords are rich and all tenants are poor, he said.

IAF Deputy Suleiman Al Saad said that giving landlords the right to evict tenants at the end of the lease would cause "a social revolution because 95 per cent of Jordanians are tenants."

Minister of Justice Taher Hikmat helped ease the tension among deputies over what many agreed is a "very sensitive issue" when he suggested the debate be postponed until lawmakers and the government alike study it further.

During the session, the House referred to its Judiciary Committee a request that the government draft a new election law. Twenty-one deputies signed the request for the new law which they said should redress what they called the

many deficiencies in the current legislation in terms of "voter registration procedures and the number of seats allocated for each constituency."

Fifty-two out of 73 deputies present voted in favour of referring the request to the Judiciary Committee despite strong arguments by some deputies that the request be turned down so that deputies would draft a new legislation and present it to the government.

Deputy Toujan Faisal said lawmakers should not leave the government with the task of drafting the law because "it tailors legislation to meet the requirement of different eras."

If deputies draft the law, she said, the government will have to work within the confines of the proposals that the House sets.

Iran

(Continued on page 10)

eration, which netted 3,287 kilograms of opium.

Gen. Seifollahi's statements were relayed by the Islamic Republic News Agency and other sources monitored in Cyprus.

In total, Gen. Seifollahi said, 80,066 kilograms of narcotics were confiscated in the past 11 months, an increase of more than 15,000 kilograms over the same period last year.

He said 14,612 traffickers and 43,464 addicts were arrested in Iran over the same period. The Iranian year ends on March 20.

The violence was triggered by an unconfirmed report that Iran's Shi'ite Muslim authorities had demolished a Sunni Muslim mosque in Mashhad, capital of neighbouring Khorasan province.

PLO seeks civilian handover deal

(Continued from page 1)

Asked if Israel would complete the pullout as planned on April 13, Mr. Rabin told Al Ahram he was not trying to stall but rejected any "accord that risks leading to failure."

"It's better to reach clear and precise understandings on all details, or the situation could explode at any moment no matter how small the problem," Mr. Rabin was quoted as saying.

"Things are complicated" on the ground. But he stressed that Israelis and Palestinians must live in peace "despite the difficulties and the opposition to the accord in Israel and among the Palestinians."

Sources close to the delegations said they were also still at odds over the size of the police

force and its arms. The PLO is seeking a force of 9,000 while Israel wants the total limited to 6,000.

Hassan Asfour, another Palestinian negotiator, said a security committee had also discussed arrangements for Gaza, in particular the joint patrols and the zones set aside for Jewish settlers.

The PLO representative to Cairo, Said Kamel, said the negotiators in Egypt would make a fresh push to draw up a final accord for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and Jericho.

Mr. Kamel added that the two sides would review "the problems raised last week in Taba, especially the technical questions relating to the Palestinian police and the release of Palestinian prisoners."

Betselem assails killings

(Continued from page 1)

dead by Israeli soldiers manning roadblocks last year, the report said. There was no danger when 12 of those died, including a four-year-old girl and the policeman.

"Security forces... should not open fire simply because a vehicle does not stop, or if others may be hit," Betselem said.

The 20-page study cited numerous examples in which drivers failed to see badly-lit or poorly-marked roadblocks. Betselem urged the army to enforce strictly its own rules of not firing on vehicles which fail to halt without reasonable suspicion of a link to serious crime.

The army spokesman said specific open fire orders could not be revealed "for obvious reasons" but that legal action is taken when necessary against those who violate the orders. Israeli troops shot and wounded three Palestinian youths on the Gaza Strip Sunday as the cabinet reviewed security measures following the killing of an Israeli woman.

Palestinian sources said the teenagers were taken to hospital from Shabura refugee camp in Rafah, which borders Egypt, after confrontations spread.

chanted "death to Arabs" at the funeral of the Israeli woman settler killed by guerrillas, but leaders shied away from tough action at a time of sensitive talks with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Police detoured cars bearing number plates issued to Arabs in the occupied Israeli town of Ashkelon where the funeral of Tzipora Sassoo was held.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, speaking a day after Palestinian guerrillas in the West Bank killed the 33-year-old woman as she travelled in a car with her husband and two children, said Israel expects PLO leader Yasser Arafat and a new Palestinian police force to keep peace when self-rule begins.

"I hope very much that Arafat understands this well — that if he and his people do not bring down the level of terrorism, terrorism will bring them down," Mr. Sarid told reporters after the weekly Israeli cabinet meeting.

"According to the current progress in the negotiations with the Palestinians... it can be estimated — it is my estimate — that Yasser Arafat will arrive in Jericho and establish residence there at the end of May," he added.

NATO hopes against strikes

(Continued from page 1)

moving their weapons or surrendering them to the U.N.

The U.N. operation to take control over the Serb weapons is shrouded in secrecy and there was no official explanation why U.N. peacekeepers could not simply take control of Serb weapons that were stuck in snow.

But officials said privately that the gun positions were numerous and U.N. manpower limited. It would stretch the peacekeepers too thin to mount guard over them and maintain their own security.

Officially, Mr. Akashi will decide whether the remaining Serb guns should be attacked though it was assumed that the attitude of NATO defence ministers would be at least influential.

An aide of France's Leotard said that by Saturday night the Serbs had withdrawn up to 80 per cent of their Sarajevo artillery sites.

An estimated 10,000 of Sarajevo's 380,000 inhabitants have been killed during fighting under the siege but the city is currently enjoying the first successful ceasefire of the conflict between Muslims, Croats and Serbs.

Some 400 Russian peacekeeping paratroops arrived on Sunday in the Serb-held Sarajevo suburb of Grbavica to take up positions along the embattled city's frontline. A 70-strong convoy of armoured vehicles, trucks and jeeps rolled into Grbavica just

as dusk fell over Sarajevo.

United Nations special envoy Yasushi Akashi said on Sunday bad weather was preventing Bosnian Serbs from withdrawing or handing over all their big guns above the city but he urged against NATO launching air attacks.

"This failure is not necessarily sufficient reason to call in air strikes," Mr. Akashi told reporters in Serb-held Sarajevo.

Only hours before the deadline expired, defence ministers from the United States, France, Italy, Britain and the Netherlands met at Aviano air base in northeast Italy to hear a report on Serb compliance and air strike contingency plans from NATO commanders.

"It is the hope of the ministers that the terms set by the NAC (NATO North Atlantic Council) will be met and that no air strikes will be necessary," said a statement issued by the ministers.

"However, they are determined to support actions to end the slaughter of innocent civilians in Sarajevo and to reinvigorate the peace negotiations."

French Minister Francois Leotard said NATO would consider on a "case by case" basis whether heavy weaponry unable to be moved because of snow or lack of fuel should be subject to air attack.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in Washington the assessment of whether the Serbs had com-




A Bosnian Serb female soldier practises aiming an anti-aircraft missile at a NATO aircraft flying overhead near Sarajevo (AFP photo)

plied with the ultimatum would begin when the deadline passed.

President Bill Clinton said

he was encouraged by reports from Sarajevo that Bosnian Serbs were moving more weapons away from the capital ahead of the deadline.




and the
Cultural Service of the French Embassy
present

A Recital of Traditional Arab Music

the recital features

**French Julian Jalal Eddin Weiss, Qanun
and Syrian Sheikh Hamza Chakour, Voice**



accompanied by
**Ziad Qadi Amin, (Nay)
and Ahmad Al-Bizm, (Tambourine)**

Wednesday, 23 February 1994 - 8:00 p.m.
Philadelphia Hotel - Philadelphia Ballroom
Refreshments and Desserts will be served during
the intermission.

Tickets for JD 8 are available from:
- The Royal Cultural Cantra, Tel. 669028
- Philadelphia Hotel, Tel. 607100
- The Cultural Service of the French Embassy, Tel 642676
- The National Music Conservatory, Tel. 687820

Federal Reserve chief steps up opposition to Clinton bank plan

ORLANDO, Florida (R) — Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan criticised Saturday a Clinton administration plan to create a single U.S. bank regulator, saying it would irreparably harm the Fed by turning it into an out-of-touch "ivory tower."

Any savings from such a move would prove fleeting and it would hurt economic growth, as well as weaken the U.S. central bank's powers to oversee the economy, Mr. Greenspan said.

"If history is any guide, any short-term savings achieved by a monopoly regulator are likely to disappear with time," Mr. Greenspan told a meeting of the independent Bankers Association of America in this Florida city.

Last November, the Treasury Department unveiled a proposal to merge the regulatory duties of the four existing bank agencies into one federal banking commission, a plan that must be approved by Congress.

Shanghai sets China's agenda with fast growth

SHANGHAI (R) — Shanghai Mayor Huang Ju, brushing aside problems of inflation and overheating, has said that China's largest city would continue fast-paced economic growth this year.

In an address to the opening session of the city's parliament that sets the tone for the national agenda, Mr. Huang described 1994 as a crucial year for reform.

He warned lagging state factories in Shanghai, China's leading industrial centre, that the crunch was coming and they would either have to stem their losses or face bankruptcy.

Mr. Huang's speech reflected all the priorities of paramount Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who spends his winters in Shanghai and uses the city as a platform to campaign for accelerated economic development.

Malawi increases fuel prices

BLANTYRE, Malawi (R) — Malawi has increased fuel prices by as much as 23 per cent with effect from this weekend.

A government statement blamed the falling value of the Malawi Kwacha, floated against a basket of mostly Western currencies two weeks ago to try to boost exports.

Petrol went up from K3.38 (about 35 cents) a litre to K3.80 (39 cents), an increase of 12.4 per cent. Diesel rose by 14 per cent from K2.91 (30 cents) per litre to K3.32 (34 cents). Paraffin (kerosene) went up by 23.2 per cent from K1.72 (18 cents) a litre to K2.12 (22 cents).

The private sector has said the fuel price rises will have a ripple effect on the agriculture-powered economy, which is still recovering from a severe drought of 1992 and a cut-off aid by Western donors to press Malawi to embrace pluralist politics.

Meanwhile, investors concerned about Malawi's landmark elections are giving a wide berth to its economy still sagging from the worst drought this century.

"Many investors have adopted a wait-and-see attitude until the election results are known," Jerry Jana, head of Malawi's chamber of commerce and industry, said of the May 17 polls.

Mr. Jana told Reuters investors could have given a boost to Malawi's agricultural-powered economy, which crashed almost eight per cent during 1992's drought that devastated most of southern Africa.

Although the economy grew 11.1 per cent last year — thanks to modest production of its chief export tobacco — the gains were stunted by high annual population growth of 3.5 per cent.

"Given the fact that tobacco exports are likely to decline further this year because rains were late, the recent financial liberalisation measures which will push inflation up, plus the election factor, we are going to have a very difficult 1994," Mr. Jana said in an interview.

"I can't hazard a figure at this moment but growth this year will be very slim, if any. It will be a year of trying to recover from the ravages of the drought as well as the cut of aid by foreign donors," he pointed out.

The World Bank, main backers of Malawi's economic reforms aimed at boosting growth through exports, has forecast growth of two per cent.

Tobacco accounts for 60 per cent of export earnings of Malawi, a poor and landlocked country of 8.7 million people. In 1993 farmers produced 48,000 kilograms of tobacco — down 10,000 kilograms from the previous year. The crop earned 234 million kwacha (\$39 million at current prices) versus 400 million kwacha (\$66.6 million) in 1992.

"But this year the rains have not only been late but uneven. In some growing areas, the crop is a disaster," Mr. Jana said. "Add to that the lower tobacco prices on world markets and increasing consumer resistance because of the anti-smoking lobby."

Aid donors, who cut off more than \$300 million in annual funding in 1992 to press for political reforms, have reinstated the aid.

"The only problem is that aid inflows are taking too long and the country is very short of hard currency," Mr. Jana said.

But on Feb. 4 central bank authorities floated the kwacha, abolished foreign exchange regulations and asked the private sector to obtain hard cash from commercial banks.

The kwacha has since fallen sharply, sparking price rises that are set to lift annual inflation above the present high of 27 per cent.

Mr. Huang said losses by state enterprises were mounting and made clear that a shake-up would mean factory closures and job losses, a political explosive issue particularly at a time of rising inflation.

The worst state enterprises would have their bank accounts frozen," Mr. Huang said.

"We will experiment with bankruptcy for a minority of enterprises who, after hard efforts, have no hope of stem-

India committed to reforms — Rao

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao said Saturday that his government was committed to continue with its economic reforms programme, launched more than two years ago.

Mr. Rao told a meeting of 140 representatives of 68 foreign firms and domestic companies in joint ventures with foreign investors that India would make procedural changes where necessary to ensure faster flow of investments.

He said that India needed higher and quicker investments, particularly in its infrastructure.

The response to the government's new economic policies had been very encouraging and approvals for foreign direct investment in the past two years had crossed \$4 billion, Mr. Rao added.

UAE banks recover from bad debts

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks have recovered from their worst bad debt problem by building large reserves and are now earning as much as they did during the oil boom, bankers have said.

The had debt problem no longer exists as the banks have managed to overcome the crisis by building large reserves from their earnings and taking measures in line with central bank instructions," said Abdullah Al Ghurair, chairman of the UAE Banks' Association.

The crisis hit in the mid-1980s, inflicting heavy losses on many UAE banks and forcing some of them to merge to avert collapse.

It was caused by the accumulation of bad and doubtful debts due to a rush in extending loans to the private sector during the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Many businessmen were unable to pay back when they suffered from losses after a sharp decline in oil prices and the Iran-Iraq war plunged the region into a recession.

The crisis, the worst in the UAE banking history, prompted the central bank to force the country's 47 banks to set aside large sums from their profits for provisions to offset their losses and strengthen their capital.

The National Bank of Abu Dhabi, the biggest UAE bank, was the worst hit by the crisis given its large loans. It rebounded into profit only recently after it used all its earnings to cover the bad debt.

"Without such measures, many banks would not have been able to pull through," a central bank official told AFP. "Our records show their financial position is much stronger now as they have large reserves."

According to the central bank, the reserves of the 19 national bank and 28 foreign units have steadily increased over the past years to reach around 4.2 billion dirhams (\$1.14 billion) at the end of June.

Mr. Ghurair, chairman of Al Mashreq Bank, said most UAE banks were expected to have boosted net profits in 1993 by around 20 per cent although they made record profits in 1992. He attributed the rise to a surge in credits, due to an economic upturn as well as a drop in interest rates on deposits.

This pushed up shareholders equities, which comprise reserves and capital, to a record 16.6 billion dirhams (\$4.52 billion) in June 1993 from 16.1 billion dirhams (\$4.3 billion) in June 1991.

The 1993 figure should now be higher as three banks have raised their capital over the past four months in line with central bank rules on adequacy.

IBM to cut staff by 1,800

NEW YORK (AFP) — IBM announced Thursday that it was laying off 625 workers in New York and Texas and told another 1,200 to expect notices soon.

The move, which follows last year's 6,000 job cuts, is part of a plan to reduce its workforce from 256,000 to 225,000 in 1994. Another 10,000 jobs will be shed when the company sells its government systems division.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY FEBRUARY 21, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: One of the months best days is the Cancer Moon times, the Sun, Saturn, Venus and Jupiter being unusual and beneficial conditions which you will need to take advantage of. Be sure to use tact too.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Good day to discuss new ideas with associates. Any delay should be accepted philosophically. Maintain a cheerful manner.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Plan your affairs on a more satisfying basis and have more security. A new contact could give you good suggestions to achieve your objectives.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Have talks with partners so you can take advantage of a new situation that arises. Analyse your progress in the evening to stay on top of things.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Stop putting off tasks at hand and gain more profits. Take treatments to improve your health and outward appearance.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Jump into regular routines without delay and get much accomplished, whether of a business or personal nature to have your utmost success.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be more willing to compromise at home for the sake of harmony. Study projects that could give you added income so that you can achieve what you want.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are now able to get the support of associates in a new project you have in mind. Use extreme care in motion today to stay out of trouble.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Analyse your financial status and find better ways to abundance. Listen to what an expert has to suggest so you can achieve much success.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Go after your aims in a most positive way and gain excellent results. Strive for increased happiness. Be poised.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take steps to improve the quality of your life. Let your conversation with others be quiet and cultured so you can have much happiness.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Sociability is the keynote today and much can be accomplished. You are able to gain a personal aim at this time which will benefit you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A good day to gain the respect of higher-ups who can give you the support you need. Many benefits can come your way now if you are persistent.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

"Everything I ever wished for has come true. I guess I should have made better wishes!"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Arghion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DULIF
AGGUE
TOXICE
STEWEN

Now arrange the mixed letters to form the eight-letter word suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: ON THE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AWAKE, MARCH, CAVES, PIRACY
Answers: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Peanuts

"ONCE A WEEK, THEY PUT MY CASE OUTSIDE IN THE SUN... SOONER OR LATER THEY'RE GOING TO LEAVE THAT LITTLE DOOR OPEN."

"ANYWAY, THIS IS A STUPID LIFE SITTING HERE ALONE WAITING FOR THAT TO..."

"AND THAT'S IT! THE DIARY ENDS RIGHT THERE!"

"HE PROBABLY GOT OUT, AND IS SITTING ON A TELEPHONE WIRE RIGHT NOW LOOKING DOWN AT US..."

"EVERY TIME YOU SEE A BIRD SITTING ON A TELEPHONE WIRE, YOU SHOULD WAVE. IT MIGHT BE YOUR GRAMPA!"

Andy Capp

"I HAVE SOME OLD PICTURES I SAVED! AH, HERE'S AN OLD ONE OF ME!"

"I DIDN'T CHANGE MUCH! SAME OLD WHISKERS AND MY TOP HAT!"

"HA HA HAW-HA! HERE'S ONE OF YOU!"

Mutt'n' Jeff

"MUTT, I WONDER IF WE CHANGED MUCH IN OUR FORTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE FUNNY PAPERS?"

"MM-I THINK I'M STILL TALL DARK AND HANDSOME!"

"I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT YOU'RE A SCREAM!"

"SLAM!"

THE Daily Crossword by James Barrick

ACROSS

- Yodel
- London gallery
- Projecting window
- Ruler
- County in England
- Driving test part
- Caster
- Sheep
- Legal papers
- Suits
- Right of sons
- Replies, for short
- Train worker
- Markets, in old Greece
- Drove out
- Kind of dancer
- Like some toys
- Moofish
- Lighten
- Solo
- Applicable
- Moves suddenly
- Raspberry's cousin
- Pear variety
- Operating
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Buthelezi endorses king's call for sovereign Zulu kingdom

PIETERMARITZBURG, South Africa (Agencies) — Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi Sunday endorsed the call by Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini for a sovereign Zulu kingdom and made a constitutional monarchy in Natal one of Inkatha's "minimum demands."

Addressing 30,000 supporters in the Inkatha-dominated area of Tylers Halt outside this city, he reaffirmed his movement's decision to boycott the April's 26-28 all-race elections.

But he added that the Zulu Nationalist Party would continue to negotiate despite its rejection of the latest constitutional compromise offered by the African National Congress (ANC).

His call for a constitutional monarchy in KwaZulu-Natal came after the demand earlier this week by King Goodwill for a sovereign Zulu state. It appeared to have been adopted by Mr. Buthelezi as a final bid to get a federal arrangement from the ANC and the government.

Mr. Buthelezi said he did not have to persuade anybody that the kingdom of KwaZulu was sovereign, "nor do I have to negotiate about the acceptance of its sovereignty."

"I would like to remind you that if we accept the 1993 constitution by fighting the election, then we would be

going against the wishes of our king," he said.

Mr. Buthelezi said he had seen the full text of the ANC's concessions Saturday and that they still did not meet Inkatha's demands.

However Inkatha wanted peace and that is why it would continue to negotiate.

"While we know that we will defeat the plans of the ANC-SACP (South African Communist Party) alliance, we also know that victory will come at a great cost to all. Even at this late hour, we have avoided belligerence and we believe in continuing to negotiate."

"And you have told the world that you do not accept the constitution and will not be going to vote. That message came out loud and clear. Dare anyone now ignore it?"

Inkatha's other demands were for a federal state, a double ballot at regional and national levels, the right of future provinces to collect and distribute taxes and the power of KwaZulu-Natal to draft its own constitution.

Mr. Buthelezi Sunday condemned the weekend massacre of 15 rival ANC supporters.

"I condemn this carnage in the strongest possible terms...I sincerely hope that whoever is responsible for this act of violence against human lives will be tracked down in short order," he said in a statement.

ANC leaders in Natal province have blamed Mr. Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party for the massacre, which was the worst political killing so far this year.

Police spokesman Bala Naidoo told Reuters Sunday that a 15th victim, one of two people wounded in the slaying, died in hospital late Saturday.

Eleven people were shot and killed as they slept in an abandoned farmhouse outside the rural village of Creighton and three others were killed as they tried to flee.

Police said two were 12 years old and 10 were teenagers.

Mr. Naidoo said the sole survivor was too ill to talk about the attack by a group of men armed with knives and automatic rifles.

He said police were trying to piece together a detailed account of the incident, adding that first reports suggested the victims were on a voter-education drive in the area.

"We have had some reports that the boys were demanding donations of 10 rand (\$3.00) from each family, but we have not confirmed this."

Local ANC leader Harry Gwala told state radio Saturday that he blamed Inkatha for the murders.

Mr. Buthelezi said it was regrettable that ANC leaders had pointed fingers at Inkatha. Political violence is expected

to intensify as South Africa prepares for its first all-race election in April. Inkatha, fearing ANC dominance in a post-apartheid South Africa, opposes the election and its leaders have called for members to peacefully resist the vote.

"Those who don't want people to vote" were responsible for Saturday's massacre, local ANC official Zabuse Mlaba said Saturday, adding the area had previously been calm.

Police Sgt. Ben Lombard said four attackers armed with assault rifles opened fire on the abandoned house. They then hacked at the bodies of their victims with knives, he said.

In Washington the White House denounced Saturday's violent attack in South Africa, calling it "a cowardly affront to the process of democratic reform."

"The White House is appalled by the killing today in South Africa of 15 campaign workers participating in the peaceful process of voter education and registration," said a statement from spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers.

"We hope that this shocking act will remind all the parties in South Africa why they should commit themselves to the electoral process as the only route to express their views on the future course of their country."



Tzeltals Indian children walk through the Siberia community in Mexico where they found refuge after their family was expelled from there home in the state of Chiapas (AFP photo)

Mexico rebels, government to meet for peace talks

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) Mayan Indian rebel leaders were expected to meet with the Mexican government's envoy Sunday to open peace talks, but warned they will not end their seven-week-old uprising until they win major reforms.

The rebels are to be picked up from three separate points in the Lacandon jungle in the southern state of Chiapas and taken Sunday afternoon to the colonial city of San Cristobal de Las Casas, where they launched their rebellion in the early hours of New Year's Day.

Government peace commissioner Manuel Camacho Solis is to meet one group of guerrilla negotiators in the jungle and travel with them to the city, one of Mexico's top tourist attractions.

Formal negotiations aimed at ending the uprising, in which more than 100 people were killed after the rebels seized several cities and towns, will begin Monday in San Cristobal's 16th century cathedral.

"We will not go to ask for pardon or to beg. We will not go to scrounge for handouts or to pick up the leftovers that fall from the full table of the powerful," leaders of the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) said in a statement released late Saturday.

"We will go to demand what is just and right for all people: Freedom, justice, democracy,

everything for everyone, nothing for ourselves," they said.

In persuading the rebels to come to the negotiating table, Mr. Camacho promised social and economic reforms in Chiapas but the precise agenda for the first round of talks has not been released and a quick solution to the crisis is thought unlikely.

Zapatista rebels say they took up arms to fight for land reform, indigenous rights and national democratic reforms. In response, the government insists national reforms will not be decided at the peace talks but says it will work to end decades of abuse and poverty suffered by Chiapas' Indian population.

The talks are to be mediated by San Cristobal Bishop Samuel Ruiz, a controversial figure who has fought for indigenous rights throughout his 34 years in the post.

Three so-called security rings formed by Red Cross workers, non-governmental organizations and military police armed with just billy-clubs were to be set up Sunday, and hundreds of police officers were deployed the cathedral late Saturday.

A ceasefire has held since Jan. 17 but the EZLN warned in its statement that they would renew attacks if the government deceives them at the negotiating table. "If lies return to the mouths of the powerful, our voice of fire will speak again," it said.

Suspected IRA firebombs hit Belfast

BELFAST (R) — Nine suspected IRA firebombs Sunday hit a string of shops, bars and restaurants across Belfast, police said.

The coordinated attacks followed a wave of seven firebombs in London stores Saturday that coincided with a summit meeting between British Prime Minister John Major and Irish leader Albert Reynolds.

A police spokesman, giving details of the Belfast firebombs, said: "The attacks caused only minor water and smoke damage. We believe the IRA is responsible."

Mr. Major and Mr. Reynolds are trying to give renewed impetus to a Northern Ireland peace initiative but the Irish Republican Army (IRA), fighting to oust Britain from the province, shows no willingness to lay down its arms and talk peace.

Police in Northern Ireland said six devices went off in shops and two pubs shortly after 0100 GMT. The bombs caused minor damage and a seventh was made safe by security forces.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary said there was a "strong possibility" that firebombs were also responsible for damage to three shops in the centre of Belfast.

Meanwhile, the president of the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, said in remarks published Sunday he did not believe the IRA would declare a temporary ceasefire in response to Anglo-Irish peace efforts.

Gerry Adams, told Dublin's Sunday Business Post he would have been informed if the Irish Republican Army was considering a temporary truce to persuade the Irish and British governments to make concessions on their Northern Ireland plan.

"In relation to a ceasefire, I would have thought somebody would have told me. You are talking about demilitarisation. I cannot see any of the armed factions taking leaps in the dark at all."

Reuters this month quoted Republican sources across Ireland as saying the IRA was debating a temporary ceasefire as a half-way step instead of the complete end to its 25-year war against Britain which the Anglo-Irish plan calls for.

Other media reports said the IRA was under pressure from moderate Republican leaders to declare some kind of truce to keep the Anglo-Irish initiative alive.

Mr. Adams, who has consistently denied being a spokesman for the IRA, told the newspaper that Sinn Fein's response to the plan would not be made until the British government clarified it.

His remarks were made one week before Sinn Fein holds its annual conference near Dublin to debate the so-called Downing Street Declaration on Northern Ireland launched by the British and Irish prime ministers.

Mr. Major has staunchly refused to clarify the text and says he will not hold talks with Sinn Fein until it accepts the principles in the plan and gets the IRA to lay down its arms.

Woman's place no longer in home but men still idle

LONDON (R) — Less than a quarter of British males still believe a woman's place is in the home but half of married men confess themselves bone idle when it comes to household chores, according to a report published Monday. The nationwide survey of changing male roles in the 1990s found that 83 per cent of men questioned agreed that married women had the right to work whatever the family situation. But only two in 100 take total responsibility for cooking, shopping and laundry and half admit they leave all these tasks to their wives. "While they are reluctant to say the woman's place is in the home, it is clear from our research that they still expect her to do the housework," said Angela Hughes of market and consumer research group Mintel. "It is tempting to conclude that it may be more of a case of men wanting the financial advantages of a working wife than having an idealistic belief in the equality of the sexes," Ms. Hughes added. Mintel's men 2000 report said women are starting to overtake men in education and on the job front. About one quarter of British men are single and 11 per cent live entirely on their own. Men are marrying later at an average age of 27 and have much more leisure time than women, usually spent by taking part in, watching or reading about sport and going to the pub.

Ban on video games with too much violence, sex

SINGAPORE (AFP) — From next month video games imported will have to get a permit as part of Singapore government moves to ban games with too much sex or violence in them. Speaking at a press conference late Friday, the deputy secretary of the Ministry of Information and the Arts, Lim Siam Kim, said the first two video games to be affected by the new ruling were Mortal Combat and Night Trap. Mortal Combat has a scene of a man pulling out a heart from a body while Night Trap shows a "human head being drilled." Dealers have a full month to stop circulating the two video games. Importers who violate the new ruling or make false declarations in their applications for import permits face a fine of 1,000 Singapore dollars (about \$600) or a jail term of up to six months. Video games are very popular with the young and many parents have expressed concern to the authorities about too much violence and sex in them.

Italian police smash prostitution smuggling ring

GENOVA, Italy (AFP) — Police said Saturday they had smashed a prostitution ring which smuggled 300 young Nigerian women into this northern Italian city over the last few months. Seventeen Nigerian men were arrested during the operation, including 39-year-old Alfonso Anyawu, a director of Italy's Nigerian Citizens' Association, police said. The network, which forced the women to become prostitutes after gaining them access to the country, operated primarily in the northeast provinces of Liguria, Piedmont and Lombardy and had links in several other European cities. Police said they also recovered large sums of money and objects such as miniature coffins used to threaten the women.

Jackson clan salutes Elizabeth Taylor

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Michael Jackson drew a nearly five-minute standing ovation Saturday as the "Jackson family honours" turned into a lovefest between the embattled entertainer and his fans. Jackson looked relaxed and smiled broadly as the crowd of more than 12,000 at the MGM Grand Gardens welcomed him. "I love you," he told the audience repeatedly before presenting a lifetime achievement award to Motown Records mogul Berry Gordy, who helped launch the Jackson Five. Jackson later presented a similar award to good friend Elizabeth Taylor for her work in the fight against AIDS. "Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your loyalty. Thank you for your love and your friendship," Jackson told the two-hour, 40-minute program. The two-hour, 40-minute program, Jackson joined other family members on the stage for a final song, If You Only Believe.

N. Korea enforces news blackout on nuclear accord

SEOUL (Agencies) — Five days after agreeing to accept international nuclear inspections, North Korea is still keeping the news a secret from its people.

But South Korean officials say the Communist country probably will stick to its agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on nuclear inspections.

North Korea's government-controlled media has yet to report on the country's decision last Wednesday to allow inspections of its seven declared nuclear facilities by the Vienna-based IAEA, a U.N. nuclear watchdog.

Adding to concern, as of Sunday the Pyongyang government has yet to issue North Korean visas for IAEA inspectors. South Korea's national Yonhap News Agency said in a dispatch from Vienna.

But Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo, returning to Seoul Saturday from Washington, said there is no reason to believe that the North will back down on inspections.

Speaking to local reporters, Mr. Han speculated that the North might delay the visas until it gets a firm U.S. promise that high-level talks on improving U.S.-North Korean ties will be held. The issue may come up at a working-level meeting between the two countries in New York this week, he said.

The North, a hardline Stalinist state, is anxious to improve ties with the United States, with which it has no formal diplomatic relations.

Despite its denials, North Korea is suspected of trying to build a nuclear bomb.

Meanwhile, Mr. Han said Seoul and Washington are to review later this month whether to place Patriot anti-missile batteries in South Korea.

The North has denounced the planned deployment as "an act of war" and warned it would hurt chances of resolving the nuclear standoff.

U.S. officials say their 36,000 troops based in South Korea need Patriot missiles to deter a possible North Korean Scud attack.

In a separate development, South Korean legations in Russia are flooded with asylum requests from scores of North Korean escapees from their logging camps in Siberia, a news report said Sunday.

Currently, up to 150 North Koreans are seeking to defect to South Korea through its embassy in Moscow and legations in other Russian cities, the national news agency Yonhap said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan, Russia to resume talks

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan and Russia will resume talks on the disputed Kuril Islands on Feb. 21 and 22 in Moscow, but a major breakthrough is unlikely amid political uncertainty there, newspapers here reported Sunday. It will be the first bilateral meeting on the issue since Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed in October to prepare to hand back two of the four Kuril islands off northern Japan. The Japanese delegation, headed by Hiroshi Fukuda, deputy vice minister for foreign affairs, hopes to go ahead with the negotiations in line with the agreement, the Sankei Shimbun said. But the newspaper said no major progress could be expected during the two-day meeting amid growing opposition in Russia to the returns, following the recent election victories of Russian nationalists. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of Russia's ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party, has said Russia would never cede territory to Japan or any other country. Japan has been demanding the return of the four Kuril Islands, which were occupied by Soviet troops at the end of World War II, refusing to sign a peace treaty or offer substantial aid to Moscow until the matter is settled.

Fierce fighting reported in Angola

LUANDA (AFP) — Government troops were locked in fierce fighting with rebel UNITA forces across Angola Saturday, an Angolan army spokesman said. Brigadier Joao Manuel told Angolan journalists the main area of fighting was around the towns of Ukuma and Tchindjenje about 90 kilometres (55 miles) from Huambo, a UNITA rebel stronghold. The daily government paper Jornal De Angola said Friday that government troops had lost control of roads around the towns of Cubal, Ganda and Camhamba in the Benguela province. Gen. Manuel said the fighting was continuing Saturday around Ganda, without saying who controlled the town. He confirmed that rebels had stopped shelling Malange and Cuito where humanitarian aid flights had resumed, but added that the union for the total independence of Angola (UNITA) was planning a major offensive in several areas. Meanwhile Jornal De Angola also reported clashes round Ucuva, Ambriz and Caxito in the province of Bengo, north of the Angolan capital. The Angolan government also accused UNITA of bombing some regions in the Cuando Cubango province, in the southeast.

'Japan eyes cabinet reshuffle on Feb. 28'

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa plans to announce his first cabinet reshuffle on Feb. 28 to rebuild the fragile six-month-old government, newspapers here said Sunday. The Asahi and the Mainichi newspapers said that Mr. Hosokawa was considering replacing several positions including his chief cabinet secretary and political reform minister. Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii might lose his job following allegations that an industrial group gave him 10 million yen (\$95,000) in secret donations, Asahi said. Mr. Hosokawa hopes the leaders of the seven-party coalition will consent to the reshuffle early this week, allowing him to make a final decision by Thursday, it said. Some coalition members who previously opposed the reshuffle have eased their stances, the newspaper said. Chief Cabinet Secretary Masayoshi Takemura, who is targeted for replacement, said Saturday he would accept Mr. Hosokawa's choice. "This is a matter of the prime minister's decision," he said. In place of Mr. Takemura, Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata might take the position, while Tomiichi Miyayama, head of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the largest in the coalition, is to join the cabinet, news reports have said.

Russia to sell carriers, submarines

TOKYO (AFP) — Russia plans to dispose of 26 warships, including aircraft carriers and submarines, in a bid to further overcome its financial troubles, a Japanese newspaper here reported Sunday. In a story dispatched from Vladivostok, the Tokyo Shimbun quoted Russian Pacific Fleet sources as saying the Russian Navy commander approved the sale last month, but had not decided on prices or buyers of the warships. Russia is to sell three aircraft carriers, eight submarines, four battle cruisers, six destroyers, two disembarkation ships and three others, the daily said. Last year Russia disposed of 81 old ships, mainly exporting them to China as material for housing construction. Russian officials said possible destinations of the ships would be China, South Korea and North Korea but added that it would carefully deal with the export following international disputes on its sale of submarines to Pyongyang. News reports said last month that North Korea had embarked on the purchase of some 40 submarines through a small Japanese trading company in a deal estimated to be worth \$8 million. The Russian officials said they hoped to dispose of the ships through three countries including Japan and the United States. The newspapers said a U.S. company already asked the Russian Navy Headquarters for an aircraft carrier to be used as a restaurant.

Abkhazian leader to meet U.N. envoy

GENEVA (AFP) — Vladislav Ardzimba, head of Abkhazian separatists in Georgia, arrived for talks with U.N. special envoy Edouard Brunner here Sunday ahead of new peace negotiations on the conflict said to have killed 11,000 Georgian troops.

U.N. spokeswoman Therese Gastaud said: "Mr. Ardzimba and Mr. Brunner, special representative of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, were meeting ahead of peace talks scheduled to resume here Tuesday after a month-long break."

Tuesday's negotiations, the third round to date, would focus on the political status of Abkhazia, an autonomous republic in northwestern Georgia where a year-long bloody separatist conflict led to the routing of Georgian forces in September.

Last Thursday, Abkhazia accused Georgia of massing troops, armoured vehicles and artillery near its border for a possible fresh invasion. The Georgian government denied the charge.

Greece urged to drop blockade of Macedonia

ATHENS (AFP) — Six of Greece's partners in the European Union (EU) have called on Athens to lift its economic blockade of Macedonia, a European diplomat said here Sunday.

The source said the six ambassadors or representatives of London, Paris, Bonn, Rome, the Hague and Copenhagen, had jointly called on Greece to drop its action

against the former Yugoslav republic during a meeting Friday night with the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, Christos Zacharakis.

It said the ambassadors had conveyed their countries' concern over the measures adopted last Wednesday.

The six countries concerned had all forged diplomatic relations with Skopje last December, before Greece took

the rotating presidency of the EC, much to Athens' disgruntlement.

While Greece has been asked to explain its decision to a meeting of the 12 EU foreign ministers in Brussels Monday, Public Order Minister Stelios Papatheodis declared Saturday night that the blockade would remain in force until Macedonia backed down.

Anti-racist to challenge Mussolini in Italian polls

ROME (R) — The daughter of a Somali princess will challenge the granddaughter of wartime fascist dictator Benito Mussolini for a seat in parliament in Italy's elections next month.

The battle in Naples between anti-racist Dacia Valent and neo-fascist Alessandra Mussolini was set as candidates in the March 27-28 elections registered their bids for office before an official deadline expires Monday night.

Tycoon-turned-politician Silvio Berlusconi, spearheading a rising right, will run in Rome's historic centre, where he will be opposed by current Budget Minister Luigi Spaventa, an independent campaigning for the broad left "progressives" pact.

Ms. Valent, 31, was catapulted from obscurity as a black policewoman in Sicily to a seat in the European Parliament in 1989 on a leftist ticket after she was racially insulted and attacked in a petrol station near Palermo.

In a statement, she said she would run in Mussolini's Naples base for a "rainbow coalition for civil rights" and

appealed to parties on the left and in the centre to stay out of the battle and make it a straight race.

"I like Alessandra Mussolini. She's intelligent, enterprising and, when it comes to down to it, she's as black as I am," Ms. Valent, whose father was an Italian diplomat, told Corriere Della Sera newspaper.

Ms. Mussolini, a deputy in the outgoing parliament for the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI), was not available for a response.

She has said the anti-semitic race laws of her grandfather, who united them Italian Somaliland with Ethiopia in 1935 in an imperialist military adventure, were a mistake forced upon him by Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler.

Candidates in the elections, expected to redraw the political map after Italy's corruption scandals, will be elected for the first time on a winner-takes-all constituency system for 75 per cent of the 630 seats in the lower house of parliament.

The remaining 25 per cent will be decided by proportional representation — giving the

political big names the chance of a seat in parliament anyway even if they lose in constituencies.

In a country where actors, sports stars, and even hard-porn actresses have run — and won — office, the vote is already shaping up as colourful.

In Bologna, Italy's "red bastion," ex-Communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) leader Achille Occhetto will face the man whose advertisements for fashion firm Benetton, including its latest of a blood-drenched cloth of a soldier killed in Bosnia, have caused international outrage.

Photographer Oliviero Toscani is standing on a "boycott Occhetto" platform — borrowing a cry that his ads of a dying AIDS patient, exposed genitals and a nun kissing a priest have brought down on Benetton.

Umberto Bossi, outspoken leader of the federalist Northern League, is standing in Milan, where the challenge will come from former World Cup soccer star Gianni Rivera.

The new voting system has

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi Arabia sack Beenhakker

DUBAI (R) — World Cup qualifiers Saudi Arabia have sacked Dutch coach Leo Beenhakker who had been hired to lead them to the finals in the United States this year. An official statement issued Saturday night said the decision had been taken in consultation with Beenhakker and implied that Saudi Arabia were unhappy with the way things were going under the Dutchman. "It has become clear that the short time left until the World Cup will not help in reaching our goals," the statement said. It said agreement had been reached with a new coach but declined to name him. Saudi Mohammad Al Kharashi would train the team until the arrival of the new coach, it added. Beenhakker, who previously coached Ajax Amsterdam and Real Madrid, signed a contract with Saudi Arabia in November after the national side had sacked Brazilian coach Jose Candido.

Newborn named Lillehammer

LILLEHAMMER (R) — An Italian couple in Bologna got carried away by Olympic fervour and named their infant daughter 'Lillehammer'. "Imagine naming a girl 'Hammer'," lamented Tullio Ferraro at the Italian Olympic Committee after hearing of the new Miss Lillehammer in the north Italian town. Lillehammer, founded in 1827, is partly built on land belonging to an old farm called 'Hammer'. Hammer means the same as the English word hammer and is also surname in Norway. 'Lille' means small. Last month, one Norwegian woman called Lilly Hammer arranged her own alternative Olympics, joking she thought she had been awarded the games.

Only 200 at final of Chinese tournament

BEIJING (R) — Only about 200 spectators turned out to watch second seed Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia beat Japan's Kyoko Nagatsuka in the final of China's first women's professional tennis tournament Sunday. Most of the fans in the indoor stadium, which can hold several thousands people, were foreign residents. The tournament has attracted little interest all week. Basuki, ranked 38th in the world, beat the English-seeded Nagatsuka 6-4 6-2 to take her fifth tour title since she turned professional in 1991.

McKinney retains IBF title

PRETORIA (R) — Kennedy McKinney of the United States retained the International Boxing Federation (IBF) junior-featherweight title when he stopped Jose Rincones of Venezuela after two minutes and 40 seconds of the fifth round in their scheduled 12-round fight Sunday.

Ma's army storms to victory

BEIJING (AFP) — China's flourishing team of women distance runners, known as 'Ma's family army' swept to victory in the international women's road relay here Sunday. The six-member Chinese team, coached by the mercurial Ma Jianren and including 3,000m and 10,000m world record holder Wang Junxia, finished the 42.195 kilometre marathon course in a time of 2hr 16min 23 sec, ahead of Romania and Russia. Wang, Qu Yunxia, Zhang Lirong, Wang Xiaoxia, Zhang Linli and Lu Ou are all from the northeastern province of Liaoning — the training base for Ma's team of runners which took the athletics world by storm by rewriting the middle and long-distance records, books at the world championships and regional games last year. Teams competing in the \$50,000 event came from Australia, Canada, China, the Netherlands, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Romania, Russia and the United States.

Edberg wins Stuttgart Open title

STUTTGART (AFP) — Swede Stefan Edberg claimed he was back to his best here after beating Goran Ivanisevic to clinch the Stuttgart Open here Sunday. Edberg, seeded three, won 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 and then predicted 1994 would be the year of his come-back. "I played a near perfect match, my best tennis for quite a long time," he said. "I have not beaten Goran for a long time and it was a great feeling. I feel pretty relaxed and I am enjoying my tennis. If I can continue like that I have a chance with the Grand Slam. It will be my come-back year, everything is looking good."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KQ9 ♠A10842 ♠103 ♠A94
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass
What action do you take?

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KQ9783 ♠52 ♠10754 ♠6
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠KQ ♠A1084 ♠QJ1075 ♠2
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
What do you bid now?

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AK73 ♠A9542 ♠63 ♠44
What is your opening bid?

Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠73 ♠865 ♠AKQ86 ♠42
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KJ109752 ♠KJ2 ♠A2 ♠4
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?

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Kidderminster target league place after West Ham defeat

LONDON (AFP) — Kidderminster Harriers set their sights on a place in the English league after their FA Cup fairytale ended in tears with a 1-0 home defeat by West Ham in the fifth round Saturday.

Lee Chapman's 69th minute goal scuppered Harriers' hopes of becoming the first non-league side through to the quarter-finals since 1914, but the Vauxhall conference promotion-chasers plan to build on their fabulous cup run.

Kidderminster manager Graham Allner said: "I'm proud of them all. They've done everything that has been asked of them, but in the end the gulf between us and the Premiership was just that little bit too much for us."

"I have no complaints about the result and we've had a terrific run. It wasn't to be for us in the end and now we've got to concentrate on the league."

"We're third in the conference with 17 games to go and games in hand, and we want to make it count."

West Ham manager Billy Bonds believes they can after giving the London club a real run for their money.

"Kidderminster played very well and wouldn't look out of place in the league," he said. Ipswich boss Mick McGivern was equally relieved after snatching a reply a week Wednesday thanks to their 1-1 draw at first division Walsleyhampton.

"We're relieved to be in the hat," he said. "I was disappointed with our performance when we had the ball, but I can't fault our defence. I thought our keeper and back four were very good."

Another Premiership side to under-achieve were Oldham, who were slammed by manager Joe Royle after their 1-0 win over first division strugglers Barnsley.

"There was a place in the last eight up for grabs and we played like Christmas tree fairies," fumed Royle.

Chelsea survived a late scare, when Mike Ford bit the crossbar with a penalty five minutes from time, to snatch a 2-1 victory at Oxford.

"You need a little bit of luck in the cup, but over the 90 minutes I don't think we were lucky," said Chelsea boss Glenn Hoddle. "We hit the bar twice and we could have had the game wrapped up before the penalty."

Navratilova chucks up 167th win

PARIS (AFP) — Martina Navratilova won the 167th singles title of her career here Sunday when she retained her Paris Open crown by beating French player Julie Halard 7-5, 6-3 in just under one-and-a-half hours.

But the 37-year-old world number-three, who is to retire at the end of the season, did not have things all her own way.

And she looked far from confident when she found herself just two points away from dropping the opening set.

The hard-hitting 23-year-old French number-three made all of the early running, breaking Navratilova to love in the fifth game, and keeping the defending champion on the defensive with the speed of her service returns and passing shots.

Navratilova, clearly unsettled, struggled to hang on, and needed a lucky net-cord in an important seventh game in which Halard held three break points.

But the French player, who had lost all three of her previous matches with Navratilova, played a careless tenth game to allow Navratilova back.

Koss sets another record, wins his third gold medal

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — Norwegian speedskater Johann Olav Koss triple shattered another world record Sunday to become the first triple gold medalist of the Lillehammer games. German ski jumper Jens Weissflog made a soaring Olympic comeback, and Switzerland finally broke into the win column.

In winning his fourth career gold, Koss gave Norway its eighth of these games — one more than Russia for overall medals.

Koss, the "boss" of Hamar's Viking ship hall, smashes his own world record in the men's 10,000-metre, winning the speedskating marathon in 13 minutes, 30.55 seconds. He lapped off a hefty 12.99 seconds from the record he set at Heerenveen, Netherlands, three years ago.

"Johann, Johann, Johann," the flag-waving Norwegian fans chanted as a weary Koss clutched his knees after crossing the finish line.

Saturday's 100,000 record marked the first time a speedskater has set world records in three events at a single Olympics. Last week, the 25-year-old Oslo medical student broke

the 5,000 and 1,500 marks. Koss' teammate, Kjell Storelid, was the surprise silver medalist and Dutch skater Bart Veldkamp, who beat Koss in the 10,000 at Albertville, had to settle for bronze this time.

The 29-year-old Weissflog captured gold in the 120-metre jumping competition, 10 years after his last Olympic triumph as a member of the East German team at Sarajevo.

Weissflog overtook Espen Bredesen of Norway with a mighty second jump of 133 metres after managing 129.5 metres on his first leap.

"I was really going for a big jump because I was trying to put pressure on him. Perhaps that worked," said Weissflog. After setting a bill record of 135.5 metres on his first jump, the 25-year-old Norwegian faltered on the second, jumping just 122 metres.

For Bredesen, the silver medal capped a brilliant comeback from his disastrous showing at Albertville, where he finished 58th and last in one event. Austria's Andreas Goldberg won Sunday's bronze medal.

Switzerland, an Alpine nation without a skiing medal,

had to soothe its wounded pride with a 2-2 finish on the bobsled chute Sunday.

Gustav Weder, steering the Switzerland-1 sled, became the first repeat winner in the Olympic two-man bobs.

Russia added medal no. 15 when Sergei Tarasov won the men's 20-kilometre biathlon, a mix of cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship.

Defending champion Gustav Weder, with brakeman Donar Acklin, became the first repeat winner of the two-man event. His .05 of a second margin of victory was the second closest in Olympic history.

"In the last run, I risked everything," said Weder. Swiss teammates Reto Goetschi and brakeman Guido Acklin, who led by .03 second going into the fourth and final run, won the silver. Italy's no. 1 sled, with Guenther Huber and Sefand Tiedi aboard, took bronze.

The highly touted U.S. high-tech sleds finished 13th and 14th.

A faint glimmer of an Alpine medal appeared on the Swiss horizon Sunday.

Norwegians, American camp out to see Olympics

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — A lone igloo builder, working snow-block by snow-block, set up camp Saturday among the tents that housed Norwegians and their chattering teeth through the night.

Another Norwegian cross-country skiing fan A. Hardy Norsemann, born and bred to snow and cold?

"I'm originally from New Jersey," said 34-year-old Richard Menecey as he sawed another block of white near the Nordic ski trail.

"I don't have a tent. This is do or die," said Menecey, who moved to Oslo 2 1/2 years ago. "I figured it would be cold in a tent, and maybe better in an igloo."

Bundled-up Norwegians call each other crazy for camping out in sub-zero weather just to see the Olympics. But Menecey had even the Norwegians awed.

"Look around. All these others have winter tents, with wood stoves in them," said his friend, Mats Runsten, a 34-year-old Swede planning to sleep in a warm building. "I know the Norwegians like this kind of thing. But only an American is crazy enough to try an igloo."

Lillehammer Olympic organisers urged Norwegians to

camp out in the snow, in keeping with a national tradition of partying and sleeping out along ski trails before races. About 350 were in camps set up around the Birkebeineren Ski Stadium, and more in the woods.

At night, the camps get lively.

"Hey-ah, hey-ah, hey-ah," cheered campers around a raging bonfire.

At Olympic gold-rush "towns," big army-surplus tents and lavvo, the teepees of Norway's arctic Sami herders, billowed smoke and towered over tiny pup-tents, stiff from frost inside and out.

"It's cold. The worst thing is getting up in the morning. It isn't so bad once you get your clothes on," said Per Helge Semh, 17, after a night at minus-4 degrees.

A couple nights earlier, Morten Nilsen, a 24-year-old from Askim, wrestled his tent in the dark. The mishap happened in a lump of canvas was winning. "We've been at this for about an hour. It's not right but it will have to do until the morning," said Nilsen.

Norwegians say they brave cold nights to commune with nature, face challenges, test themselves, to ski. Nilsen had a simpler explanation.

"It's cheap," he said.

Farther up the mountain, Bjørne austad of Oslo fried fish steaks on the wood-burning stove in the army tent he shared with eight other bible school students.

"When it hit minus 25 (-33F) we realised someone would have to tend the fire all night," he said. "And morning is chilly, anyway."

"To run around watching sports in the cold, and then freeze at night in a tent may be pretty stupid. But it's fun. Besides, the Olympics at home is something we will see once."

The floor of the students' carefully prepared was layered with gravel, pine branches, wood and insulating pads.

Next door, the "Huron Gang," camped out in a flimsy summer tent, with screens and a floor of snow and cigarette butts.

"We are not the outdoorsy types. We're here for the fun," said Arild Hestefjord, 30, of Hurum. He said the nights get cold because they have to turn their kerosene heater off.

One of the gang of five plopped moire "coffee doctor," a nickname for the strong

alcohol Norwegians use to lace their coffee, into his cup. There are advantages to life on the trail.

"We put our table outside this morning and were making breakfast when the racers skied by," said Melby. "They smelled the bacon."

Joo Lysebo, 21, of Larvik, setting up camp, said he ready knew how the night would be.

"Cold, with the girls complaining. They started complaining as soon as we got out of the car," said Lysebo.

Menecey's Norwegian wife had no complaints about the igloo.

"She headed south," he said. "She took our 2-year-old with her."

The Towaco, N.J., native said he would "show the Norwegians" by sleeping on a reindeer skin in the structure, about the size of a roomy coffin.

Or, if it gets too cold, he might show them the way home.

"There's a pretty good chance I'll be at the train station tonight," Menecey said.

French face Olympic Waterloo

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — France's Winter Olympic morale, hit by a bitter public row with sports Minister Michele Alliot-Marie, dipped again Sunday when gold favourite Patrice Bailly-Salins flopped in the biathlon.

Happy hosts of the Albertville Games, where they bagged three gold medals, the self-styled flying frogs have barely croaked in Lillehammer.

Philippe Condelero's bronze in the men's figure skating lifted spirits but beleaguered team chiefs had been counting on Bailly-Salins, the World Cup leader, to finally give them a victory.

The Olympic team left Paris predicting a medal haul of 12. But Condelero's medal was only their third after Anne Briand's biathlon silver and

Edgar Grosjeon's moguls bronze.

Alliot-Marie was quick to call Olympic chiefs to account. "The disappointments are multiplying. We must look into the reasons for this lack of success," she warned.

National Ski Federation chief Bernard Chevallier blasted back: "A minister ought to know how to wait. After all, they have to wait for election results to find out if they're going to be ministers in the first place."

"Madame the minister ought to wait before making a judgement, if she is capable of judging."

The atmosphere in the French camp was not helped by the acrimonious airing of their biggest Alpine ski stars, Franek Piccard and Carole Merle.



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	GHOST		THREE ON THE ROAD		CONCORD "1" No Where To Run		AMMOUN THEATRE		presents a play entitled: Al Iim Nuron		Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents	
	Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 8:30, 10:30		Arabic		Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Jabal Luweibdeh, Sayegh Commercial Centre		A popular political comedy. Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali in addition to other comedians		Ahlam Arab Summit Conference (play)	
			Show: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Arabic play "Hi America" at 8:30		Coming soon: The grand opening of the theatre		Every night at 8:15. Tickets are sold all day		daily at 9:15 p.m.	
											Theatre is closed Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays	

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan's crown prince to visit Mideast

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako will visit the Middle East in October on their first trip overseas since they married last June, a daily newspaper said Sunday. The Yomiuri Shimbun, quoting Foreign Ministry sources, said the couple would visit Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. During the two-week trip, the couple is to meet with each country's head of state, and visit ancient ruins, tourist sites and oil fields, the newspaper said. The crown prince was originally scheduled to visit the region in February 1991 but put off the trip because of the Gulf war. In January last year, his trip was cancelled again after allied forces carried out air strikes against Iraq.

Human cargo discovered in container

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Kurdish refugees from Iraq, sealed in a container and loaded onto an Estonian ferry's cardeck, are rescued Sunday after nearly suffocating on the night crossing to Sweden. The 64 men, women and children spent nine hours in the container before heat and lack of oxygen forced them to pound on the walls of their metal box. Normally there is no one on the cardeck during ferry crossings of the Baltic Sea, and the sound of pounding fists was faint compared to the cracking of ice under the ship. But a crewmember, making a brief fire patrol three hours after departure from Tallinn, Estonia, heard them.

Arab boy wins \$4m on Israel soccer pools

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A 16-year-old Israeli Arab schoolboy has won \$4 million on Israel's state football pools after predicting all 15 matches. The teenager from Majd Al Karum in the Galilee, who did not want to be named, found out Saturday night that he had hit the jackpot. With a father working in a Haifa bottling plant, four brothers and three sisters, he told Israel's Arabic-language radio station: "Yes, I'm quite happy." His father said: "I'm not going back on the production line."

Kuwait pays compensation for Iraqis

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait has paid the equivalent of \$270,000 to compensate Iraqi farmers and homeowners who are losing property along the redrawn border with Iraq, the United Nations said Sunday. A statement from the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission, which patrols the frontier, said the sum of 71.5 million Iraqi dinars will go into a special U.N. fund. The Iraqis have until Feb. 28 to present claims. The farmers will have rights to 56 million Iraqi dinars, while the remainder will be paid out to owners of 206 dwellings in Umm Qasr. The new border, demarcated over a year ago by a U.N. team, moved 11 oil wells, some farmland and an old naval base at Umm Qasr to the Kuwaiti side.

Uday Hussein: God will undo Israel-PLO deal

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's eldest son, Uday, says God will bring down any agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Palestinian self-rule. Uday based his remarks, broadcast in a Saturday television interview and published by his Babel newspaper, on a verse of the Koran saying that Muslims shall enter Jerusalem twice: "The Palestinian issue is in the hands of the Almighty..." if the agreement takes place God's word will not materialise, Uday said. Arab Muslims conquered Jerusalem for the first time in the sixth century and Uday said they were bound to retake it. Uday was one of four Iraqi intellectuals taking part in a seminar on Iraq's economy, which is reeling under U.N. trade sanctions in place since Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Kisses land Romeo taxi-driver in jail

DUBAI (AFP) — A taxi-driver has been jailed for one month for blowing kisses at a British woman in the car's rear-view mirror, a United Arab Emirates newspaper said Sunday. Al Khaleej said the 26-year-old Briton was sitting in the back of the cab in the emirate of Dubai when she saw the driver pretending to kiss her in the mirror. "The woman complained to police after she saw the driver making such provocative moves," the paper said. The 24-year-old driver was jailed on Saturday. His name and nationality were not disclosed, but taxi-drivers in the emirates are from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Four airlines fail Heathrow semtex test

LONDON (AFP) — Four airlines at London's busiest airport failed to detect fake bombs placed in luggage by government security officials, raising fears of a possible repeat of the Lockerbie disaster, the Sunday Times newspaper reported. X-ray machines at Britain's Virgin Atlantic, U.S. carriers United and American, and the Dutch KLM airline, failed to spot the deactivated bombs planted on children's dolls despite containing detonators, electrical cable and semtex plastic explosive. The explosive posed no threat to the public as it had been chemically neutralised to avoid an accident during the January security check at Heathrow airport, the paper reported. United later sacked an employee after failing the Department of Transport inspectors' test, the Sunday Times added. A semtex bomb destroyed a Pan Am flight over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in 1988, killing all 270 people on board.

After Bobbitt, Bobbott shoots dead husband

KYRIAT SHMONA, occupied West Bank (AFP) — Carmela Bobbott was to face an Israeli court on Sunday after emptying an automatic rifle into her brutal husband after 20 years of marital abuse. The 40-year-old's drama has been compared with the case of Lorena Bobbitt who cut off her husband's penis and was acquitted by a U.S. court last month. Carmela told police the beating that Yehuda Bobbott, 43, gave her on Friday night was "worse than usual." Bleeding, she sought refuge in the bedroom of her soldier son, grabbed his assault rifle and returned to the living room. Yehuda died immediately in a hail of bullets. His wife was taken to hospital to dress the bruises and cuts all over her body. "We all knew who Yehuda Bobbott was, his violent ways and the number of women he had had in his life," said a neighbour. "Nobody will mourn that man who frightened all those around him." As in the Bobbitt affair, women's rights groups have sprung to the defence of the battered wife and demanded the Kyriat Shmona court set Carmela free.

UAE to refer some cases to Islamic courts

ABU DHABI (R) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan has ordered that a wide range of crimes be tried in Islamic Sharia courts rather than in civil courts, officials said on Sunday. Lawyers said the cases involving both UAE nationals and foreigners specified in the president's decree comprised murder, manslaughter, theft, adultery, juvenile and drugs offences and crimes that cause injury. "We order the implementation of the Islamic Sharia law in all (such cases)... and that Sharia courts across the country should decide these cases," the decree said, according to a text published in UAE newspapers. The lawyers said the new decree would be applied in all the UAE's seven emirates and would also cover foreign offenders. Such crimes have so far been tried in civil courts although sentencing has been based on Islamic Sharia. The new decree means such courts no longer have the authority to try such crimes. Al Khaleej quoted a Justice Ministry official as saying that instructions had been issued to start implementing the new laws immediately.



HISTORIC ACCORD: His Royal Highness leader Yasser Arafat at Sunday's signing in Amman of a Yemeni reconciliation agreement (see page 1) (Photo by Youssef Al 'Alian)

Schoolbus hijackers demand ransom, aid for Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Three masked Afghan gunmen holding Pakistani schoolchildren hostage Sunday demanded a \$5.5 million ransom, opening of the Afghan-Pakistan border and food aid for Kabul, officials here said.

Interior Minister Naseerullah Bahar, who was late Sunday negotiating the hostages' release, has given assurances to the gunmen that their demand for 2,000 truckloads of food to be delivered to Kabul would be met.

"I have assured the three (Afghans) that they can get even 2,000 trucks of food supplies," he told reporters, adding that aid would be delivered even if it required flying helicopters to the besieged Kabul.

The Afghan capital has been suffering severe food shortages since rival factions renewed fighting for control of the city, (see page 2).

The gunmen, who were holed up in the chancery of the Afghan embassy here, still held 15 to 18 school children after hijacking the bus with some 75 passengers, including teachers and driver, earlier Sunday in Peshawar, some 170 kilometres northwest of here, and ordering that it be driven to the capital.

After arriving here, the gunmen who were armed with

pistols and explosives released 57 hostages, including the administrative officer of the Peshawar Model School to which the children belonged, officials said.

The administrative officer, Saifur Rehman, was freed with orders to establish contact with local officials and arrange a meeting with Pakistani leaders.

Mr. Rehman said that around 50 children and six female teachers were released in batches from the bus before it was driven to the Afghan embassy.

The freed children, aged up to 12 years, were taken to a hotel in Islamabad where they were being cared for.

One frightened primary section student, who was released with the first batch of hostages, said: "We were all scared, we did not know what will happen."

A contingent of elite army commanders were standing by near the embassy while negotiators spoke with the gunmen, who have also demanded safe passage to a country of their choice in exchange for the remaining hostages.

Officials said progress was being made to resolve the crisis.

"These children are like our own," one of the kidnappers told the British Broadcasting Corporation's correspondent

Zafar Abbas, who was allowed inside briefly. "We are not the enemies of these children."

However, the Afghans also said that they would not release the boys, aged about 12 or 13, until large amounts of food reach Kabul, an operation that could take days.

"They are not hopeful that it will be settled tonight," Mr. Abbas said of the kidnappers. The hostages were seated in one large room. The boys talked among themselves and the atmosphere was not tense, Mr. Abbas said.

The gunmen said they did not belong to any of the feuding Afghan factions, but wanted to draw attention to the plight of ordinary Kabul residents.

"We want the world to realise that when these (Afghan) leaders... are fighting, the people of Kabul are suffering," one gunman told Mr. Abbas.

In addition to food and money, the kidnappers demanded that Pakistan reopen its border to allow in Afghan refugees. Pakistan has been a haven for refugees throughout the 15-year Afghan war, and some 1.5 million are presently in Pakistan.

But Pakistan last month closed the border to new refugees after heavy fighting erupted Jan. 1 in Kabul.

Aqaba mayor 'duped' into meeting Israeli

AMMAN (AP) — Interior Minister Salamah Hamad on Sunday denied that the wife of the mayor of the Israeli Red Sea port of Eilat had met in an official capacity with the mayor of Jordan's city of Aqaba.

Speaking in Parliament, Mr. Hamad said Mayor Ibrahim Abul Izz was duped into meeting with the Israeli woman and that she originally identified herself as the secretary of the Belgian consul to Switzerland.

Jordan and Israel are technically at a state of war although they are negotiating peace in the 27-month-old U.S.-backed Arab-Israeli talks.

Answering a question tabled by a Muslim fundamentalist deputy, Mr. Hamad said Mr. Abul Izz had met with a

woman "whom he believed to be a secretary of the Belgian consul to Switzerland," who had arrived aboard a ferry from Egypt.

The Feb. 3 meeting was requested by the Belgian consul to Switzerland on the fringes of an international seminar at Aqaba. Mr. Abul Izz told the Associated Press in a telephone interview.

"I was surprised when she identified herself as being the wife of the mayor of Eilat," Mr. Abul Izz said. "She invited me to Eilat and gave me a letter from the Israeli mayor."

"But I turned down the invitation and refused to accept the letter," Mr. Abul Izz said, adding that he immediately notified authorities of the affair. The two visitors left

Jordan immediately, he said.

Mr. Abul Izz said he did not remember the name of the woman. An Israeli municipal spokesman gave the name of the wife of Eilat Mayor Gabi Kadoush as Chantal, and said she held both Israeli and Swiss passports.

It was not clear whether the person accompanying the woman really was the Belgian consul to Switzerland.

Mr. Hamad told Parliament that the government had lodged a protest with the Belgian embassy in Amman.

Belgian Ambassador Pierre de Mennelaere declined to comment. Speaking to the AP through his secretary, he also refused to provide the name of the Belgian consul in Switzerland.

Egypt train attackers 'planned massacre'

ASSYUT, Egypt (Agencies) — Magistrates investigating a weekend ambush on a train in southern Egypt said Sunday they thought militants who opened fire had wanted to stop the train and kill many of the passengers.

Police, one said, had found traces of bullets in the driver's cabin suggesting the gunmen had intended to kill the driver to force the train to stop "in an attempt to inflict a catastrophe in the whole train."

Local security officials, meanwhile, said a quick plan had been drawn up to ensure safe passage of trains in areas "where terrorism is active." They said police had sent out more patrols and set up checkpoints along the roads in hot-spot areas.

The Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group), which is trying to topple Egypt's government and set up a purist Islamic state, said it launched Saturday's attack on the train, which runs from Cairo to Luxor and the ancient capital of the Pharaohs.

A Polish architect, a Taiwanese student and two Egyptians were wounded in the attack. Security sources said about six men riddled the sleeper train with automatic rifle bullets nine kilometres beyond Assiut, a southern stronghold of the Gamaa.

The two wounded tourists left hospital Saturday and went on to Luxor to join friends, the sources added.

The security officials in Assiut said a police search for the attackers had yielded no results so far.

The militants riddled every car of the train with bullets, especially the restaurant where they may have expected to find many passengers, an investigator said.

Witnesses said there were up to six attackers with automatic weapons but the Interior Ministry said the attack was the work of a lone gunman.

It was the third Gamaa-

claimed attack against foreigners in Assiut within a week.

On Wednesday, tourists aboard a Nile cruise ship came under fire and two days earlier Romanian engineers survived a gun attack on a bus.

According to the witnesses, slogans such as "Islam is coming" and "Revenge for our martyrs" were inscribed on the cartridges used in the attack on the train.

In more violence on Sunday, police officer Adel Mohamed Mubarak was gunned down outside his home in the town of Badari, also in Assiut province, as he left for work out of uniform. The assailant escaped.

The Gamaa said it carried out the train attack as "swift retribution" for the sentencing to death of an army officer and two conscripts charged with mining an airstrip close to the Libyan border.

In a statement to an international news agency, the Gamaa said the men, whom it called "heroes," were members who were charged with attempting to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak by blowing up the airstrip at Sidi Barrani.

The strip is often used by Mr. Mubarak or by ministers who stop there, in compliance with a U.N. ban on flights to Libya, before driving on across the border.

The Gamaa said another three of its members were sentenced to 10 years hard labour. It threatened further action if the condemned men are executed.

"This (the train attack) is swift retribution in reply to the death sentences only. If they are carried out, there will be further retaliation," it said. "To Mubarak we say — whoever transgresses God's law must be killed, whoever hangs anyone must be killed, whoever orders another's death must be killed, and whoever allows torture must be killed."

Iran holds 89,500 prisoners — official

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran has around 89,500 prisoners in its jails, more than half of whom are drug traffickers or addicts, a top prison official disclosed in an interview published Sunday.

It was the first official figure for the total number of inmates in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Assadollah Lajevardi told the English-language newspaper Tehran Times that the prisoners included 3,776 Afghans and fewer than 10 other nationals, but he gave no other details on foreign convicts.

The Islamic Republic still hosts more than two million Afghan refugees from the war in their country. Moreover, Iran is a transit route for drugs entering from Afghanistan and Pakistan destined for Europe.

Mr. Lajevardi, the head of Iran's prison organisation, said 53 per cent of the detainees were drug traffickers and addicts, down from the 65 per cent reported in October 1992.

Women comprise five per cent of the total inmates, he said.

The figures were released after the U.N. Human Rights Commission published a report in Geneva on Friday criticising

Iran's record and accusing it of holding 19,000 political prisoners.

The Foreign Ministry rejected the report, calling it "biased, politically motivated and influenced by enemies of the Islamic republic."

Iran has no prisoners of conscience and those jailed for drug-trafficking, murder and terrorism are subject to the "due process of law," the ministry insisted.

The authorities do not count jailed members of armed opposition groups as political prisoners.

Drug seizures soar

Drug seizures by Iranian law enforcement authorities have soared in the past year despite efforts to clamp down on smuggling, according to official reports Sunday from Tehran.

Just last Friday, 20 traffickers were killed when law enforcement agents smashed a drug ring in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchistan province, the commander of Iran's law enforcement branch, Major General Reza Seifollahi, told a Tehran news conference.

He said the agents arrested another 103 people in the op-

(Continued on page 5)

COLUMN

Yeltsin had 'quite a serious' cold

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin caught "quite a serious" cold and had to make a real effort to be at the Kremlin to meet British Prime Minister John Major last Tuesday, Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov said at the weekend.

Interviewed on the Ostankino Television channel Saturday night, Mr. Kostikov however indicated that Mr. Yeltsin was now fully recovered, confirming reports on Russian radio. Mr. Kostikov said Mr. Yeltsin, who convalesced at his dacha in Zavidovo, 80 kilometres outside Moscow, had put his time to good use drawing up the general policy speech he is to give to parliament on Feb. 24. "Making the most of his indisposition, if one can say so, he took a certain time-out from politics, away from his routine activities, to finish work on a very important political document, namely his speech to the Federal Assembly, effectively to Russia and the Russians."

He said that the speech covered 70 pages, four or five hours reading matter, but Mr. Yeltsin would only read out a 30 to 40-minute resume in parliament, while a copy of the speech in its entirety would be distributed to both houses (the State Duma and the Federation Council) the same day.

Clinton's eye getting better

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton said his left eye, which was puffy and bloodshot from a mild infection, had improved to the point where he no longer looks "like a monster from the deep." Mr. Clinton, following a nationally broadcast address from the Oval Office, said his eye was much better. Earlier in the week he was diagnosed as having viral conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye. "The doctor told me that nothing would heal it but time," said Mr. Clinton, whose eye was only slightly puffy. Much of the redness around the pupil of the eye also had cleared up. "At least I don't look like a monster from the deep, which I did two days ago," said Mr. Clinton, who has been taking eye drops laced with antibiotics.

Queen Elizabeth arrives in Guyana

GEORGETOWN (AFP) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth II arrived here Saturday, as Guyanese President Cheddi Jagan said there were no hard feelings left over from a power struggle 30 years ago. Most of the nation's adults recalled that it was Queen Elizabeth who signed the order dismissing Mr. Jagan as premier in 1964 when he refused to accept defeat at the polls. Prior to the arrival Mr. Jagan told journalists that both he and the queen had forgotten the events of past years. Accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, the queen arrived from Anguilla to a rousing welcome at Timehri International Airport before driving along the 26-mile road route to the National Cultural Centre. At the airport the royal couple was greeted by a welcoming committee including British High Commissioner David Johnson, Mr. Jagan and his wife Janet. Several people in large crowd waved both the Union Jack and the flag of Guyana.

Expedition plans to trace 'silk route'

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian and Chinese adventures plan to undertake a 10,000-kilometre (6,000-mile) expedition through inhospitable Central Asian terrain in an ambitious bid to rechart the ancient "silk road." The journey will begin from Tashkent on May 1 and traverse Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kirghizia before entering China and then return to India via Nepal, the Press Trust of India reported Sunday. Four Chinese will be among the members of the 17-member expedition, which will include experts in geology, demography, herbal medicine, agriculture and archaeology, the agency said. Expedition president, retired Indian army Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia, said the journey was aimed at rediscovering trade, cultural and religious links between India and Central Asia and China.

Key points in Yemen reconciliation accord

AMMAN (AFP) — The main points of the Yemeni reconciliation accord were signed in Amman on Sunday. The 32-page document was drawn up by a committee representing Yemen's main political parties, to end a seven-month crisis that has threatened the country's unity.

Security

— The arrest and trial of all those involved in political assassinations and other security incidents and extradition of wanted persons through Interpol or diplomatic channels.

— The committee affirms the need for stronger measures against the carrying of weapons and against military training camps or any other centres for training in acts of violence. Implementation of such measures must not exceed three months.

— Removal of all checkpoints in cities, whether they belong to the Interior Ministry, the Defence Ministry or are jointly run by the two ministries. The Interior Ministry is

entrusted with assigning locations for such checkpoints provided it cooperates with the Defence Ministry. A committee will be formed for this purpose within two weeks.

— A national reconciliation conference is to be held between tribes to end bloodshed and revenge attacks. Anyone indulging in revenge attacks will be considered an outlaw and severe measures will be taken against him by the competent authorities. Reconciliation should be announced within one month.

— Redeployment of some army units in the provinces of Taaz, Lahaj, Ibban, Shabwa, Beidha and Mareb. Their new positions will be determined by an armed forces committee such that they meet the requirements of the country's defence strategy and protect vital installations. A decision to this effect should be issued within a week and implementation should be immediate.

— Freezing of all mobilisation, recruitment or armament campaigns.

— Setting up an intelligence service, restructuring the interior ministry by merging its various security units and evacuating the armed forces from cities. They should be redeployed within two months maximum.

— Restructuring of the armed forces.

Administration and state

— Sanaa will be the political capital and Aden the economic hub, each forming an autonomous province with independent financial and administrative duties as well as elected councils.

— Defining the powers of the presidential council, the president and his deputy and revising the authority of the council's office.

— Islam should be religion and Sharia the law of the state.

— Authority should be in the hands of the people, who should exercise it directly through a referendum or general elections. They may also exercise it through the legislative, executive and judi-

cial bodies and local councils.

— The state should be based on democracy, the peaceful use of authority and party pluralism, as well as administrative and financial decentralisation.

— Public freedom is to be protected, human rights respected, and freedom guaranteed for trade union, professional, intellectual and cultural activities, while scientific work is to be encouraged in all fields.

— Parliament should be elected directly and freely by the people, while the advisory council has the right to advise on the budget and development plans.

— The presidential council comprises five members, to be elected by parliament and the advisory council. The presidential council should elect its chairman and deputy chairman. The council members are not entitled to more than two terms. Its functions cover representation of the state, calling elections, dissolving parliament after consultation with the cabinet and calling a referendum.

— Local rule should be based on a new administrative plan replacing existing units and achieving a full merger, whereby all signs of division will disappear and national unity is ensured.

Constitution

— Adherence to the present constitution until it is revised, for a period not exceeding five months. A committee is to be formed from political parties and intellectuals for this purpose.

— Revision of the parliamentary and local elections.

Economy

— Mapping out balanced development plans and annual investment programmes to achieve economic and social development.

— Reforming the monetary system, combating corruption and the smuggling of arms and drugs, and implementing laws to establish a free zone in Aden.